PRO FOOTBALL SPECIAL

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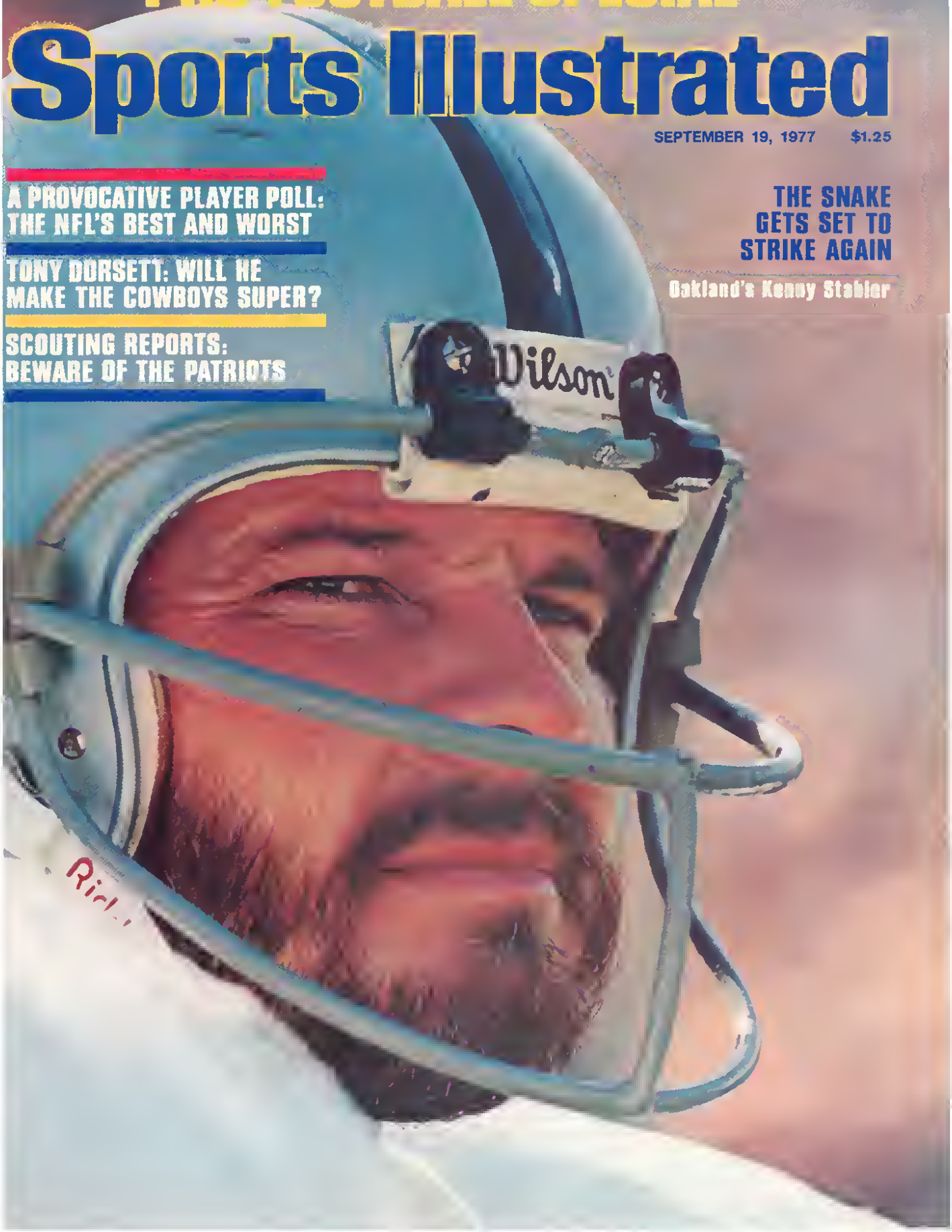
A PROVOCATIVE PLAYER POLL: THE NFL'S BEST AND WORST

TONY DORSETT: WILL HE MAKE THE COWBOYS SUPER?

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Oakland's Kenny Stabler



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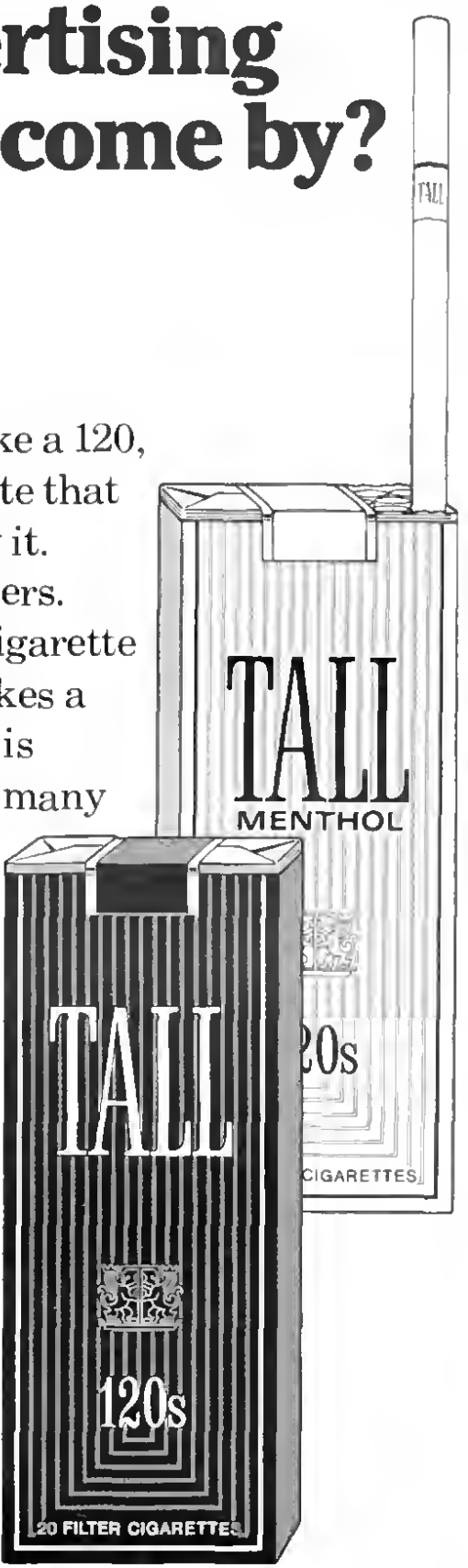
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Next Week

A BUNCH OF BOXING stalwarts (and not a few bums) square off in a flurry of fistic activity in widely scattered U.S. and foreign arenas, with seven titles on the line and a number of reputations at stake. Pat Putnam reports.

YOU'LL COME A-WALTZING, MATILDA, with me if Australia becomes the first challenger in 107 years to beat the U.S. in the America's Cup. Colas Phinizy is at Newport, R.I. for the duel of the 12-meters.

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

It has been remarked that journalism is "history on the run," but in putting together this week's pro football issue, Senior Editor Mark Mulvoy found that history couldn't seem to make up its mind whether to run or crawl. Mulvoy sent Senior Writer Bob Jones to Alabama to catch up with Oakland Raider Quarterback Kenny Stabler, and Jones lived—although just barely—to tell the tale in *Gettin' Nowhere Fast* (*page 88*). Jones and Photographer Jim Drake climbed aboard the Stabler merry-go-round and when they staggered off six days later they were so dizzy they could barely stand up. "It felt more like three years," says Jones. "I wouldn't swear that Stabler was trying to kill us, but after I finished the story I was ready for a liver transplant." Life on the run with Stabler was never dull, says Jones, although there were what he recalls as "many stunned moments of alcoholic shock." Drake preferred not to talk about the ordeal but did mention that he was considering having his tongue sanded and waxed and hiring it out as a dance floor.

To complement the story on the veteran Stabler, Mulvoy wanted to take a close look at this year's most celebrated rookie, Tony Dorsett. Unlike most top draft choices, Dorsett was acquired by an NFL powerhouse—the Dallas Cowboys—an anomaly that, along with his Heisman Trophy and NCAA running records, provoked a remarkable buildup of fan and media interest. When Staff Writer Joe Marshall and Photographer Walter Iooss arrived at the Cowboy training camp in Thousand Oaks, Calif., they knew they were going to have to dig in for a long stay.

"Everyone was clamoring for time with Dorsett," says Marshall, "trying to get a little piece of him. So I decided to keep my distance and wait for things to develop naturally." The wait proved to be a long one—18 days for Marshall, 13 for Iooss—but the results (*Tony D Comes to Big D, page 38*) provide a detailed look at life in a pro football training camp.

"Training camps are fairly routine," says Marshall, "and you can spend all day waiting for one little thing of significance to happen. But if, at the end of 18 days, you've got 18 little things to write about, you've got a pretty good story."

One "little thing" was the discovery that Dorsett had been fined for missing curfew one night, as Marshall learned before Dorsett himself. Iooss and Marshall went to Dorsett's room to offer him a ride to the beach and found a note tacked to the door informing Dorsett of the fine.

After 18 days of Dorsett-watching, Marshall is itching for the regular season to begin. "There's nothing duller than preseason practice," he says. "There's very rarely any drama because they walk through the plays. But most people don't understand that."

Bob Jones and Jim Drake understand it and, when last seen, they were petitioning for next year's training-camp beat.

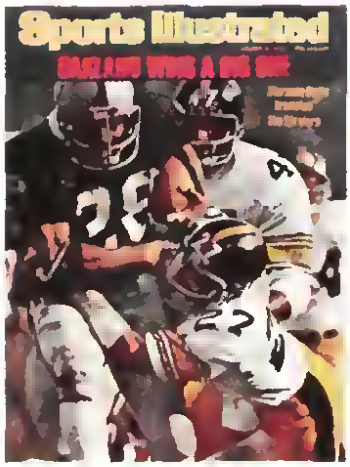


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Jack Mayer



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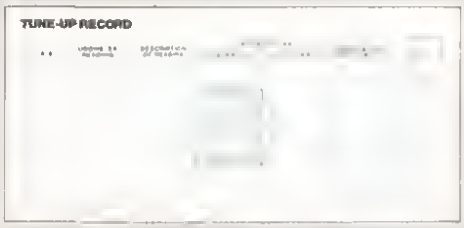
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SCORECARD

Edited by ROBERT H. BOYLE

WHOOSH

"Boat speed" is a term America's Cup yachtsmen have been using a lot this summer. When a sailor says this 12-meter has more "boat speed" than that one, he seems to imply something more complicated than that one boat goes faster than another, although it is not clear exactly what. Last week *The New York Times* was explaining why the Giants had cut Lineman Al Simpson. He may have been too slow, but you couldn't be sure. The reason Simpson was let go, the *Times* reported, was that he lacked "foot speed." At this rate, horses may soon be winning races with "hoof speed" and pitchers will soon be striking out batters with "ball speed." Hey, it might even replace "velocity."

YES, BUT

The city of Los Angeles has released a survey showing that 70% of those interviewed in L.A. County favor holding the 1984 Olympics there. A survey to measure local support, or the lack of it, is required by the U.S. Olympic Committee, as a result of the rejection of the 1976 Winter Olympics by Denver voters. But the L.A. survey revealed taxpayers are concerned. If city and county funds are needed to put on the Games, only 35% of those interviewed want them.

WELCOME HOMERS

The lively baseball may be even livelier than SI's tests indicated (June 13). According to Robert H. Kingsley of the Kingsley Baseball Service in Rockville, Md., home-run production in the major leagues through Sept. 9 was up a whopping 51% over last season. The American League's is higher (55.5%) than the National's (46.5%). The former not only has two expansion teams, but also their parks, the Kingdome in Seattle and Exhibition Stadium in Toronto, are relatively conducive to homers. In contrast to last year, the National League now has three parks that are tougher—Olympic Stadium in Montreal, the Astrodome, which has moved back its fences, and Busch Memorial Stadium in St. Louis, where the temporary center-field fence was removed.

Last year 2,235 homers were hit in the majors, an average of 93.1 per team. Kingsley calculates that by the end of the season the team average will be 138, which is just dandy for him. Some years ago he figured out that a team average of 135 homers would be "best for baseball from all points of view." Says Kingsley, "We are happy to see the home run come back to its rightful place."

ROYAL AND BROYLES

What happens to former college football coaches when a new season begins? In the case of Darrell Royal of Texas and Frank Broyles of Arkansas, both of whom retired after last season, they were able to get a good night's sleep before last Saturday's opening games.

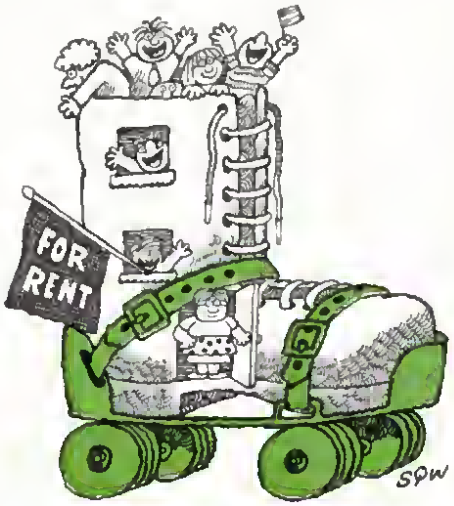
Broyles, who is the athletic director at Arkansas, spent Saturday playing nine holes of golf and then attended a fashion show with his wife Barbara. That evening in Fayetteville, the Broyles and their twin daughters, who are freshmen at Arkansas, watched the Razorbacks wallop New Mexico State 53–10. It was the first time in 30 years that Broyles and his wife saw a game together in which they had a real rooting interest. Says Broyles of the day, "It was like a spring game—when you want everything to go right, but don't have to make any decisions."

Over in Austin, Royal was surprised to find himself "really keyed up" about the game with Boston College when he awoke at 7:30 on Saturday. The athletic director at Texas, Royal went to his office in Memorial Stadium to pick up some tickets and ran into Fred Akers, his successor as coach. "His jaws were real tight," says Royal. "I know the feeling." After attending a reception for House Speaker Tip O'Neill, a Boston College alumnus, Royal went to his press-box seat in the stadium, and there his anxiety vanished as Texas built a 23–0 halftime lead. "They've got a good passing game going," he said. "They're looking great." Royal was also impressed by the Texas band. "I've always said the Longhorn band was outstanding, but I said it largely on blind faith. Now, after seeing them at halftime, I know it's true."

ROLL ON

O.K., folks, get ready. Southern California has come up with a new fad. Or rather revived an old one. It's roller skating, using skates with polyurethane wheels just like those that revived skateboarding. But unlike skateboarding, which is dominated by kids, roller skating attracts everyone from toddlers to grandparents who just like it for relaxation.

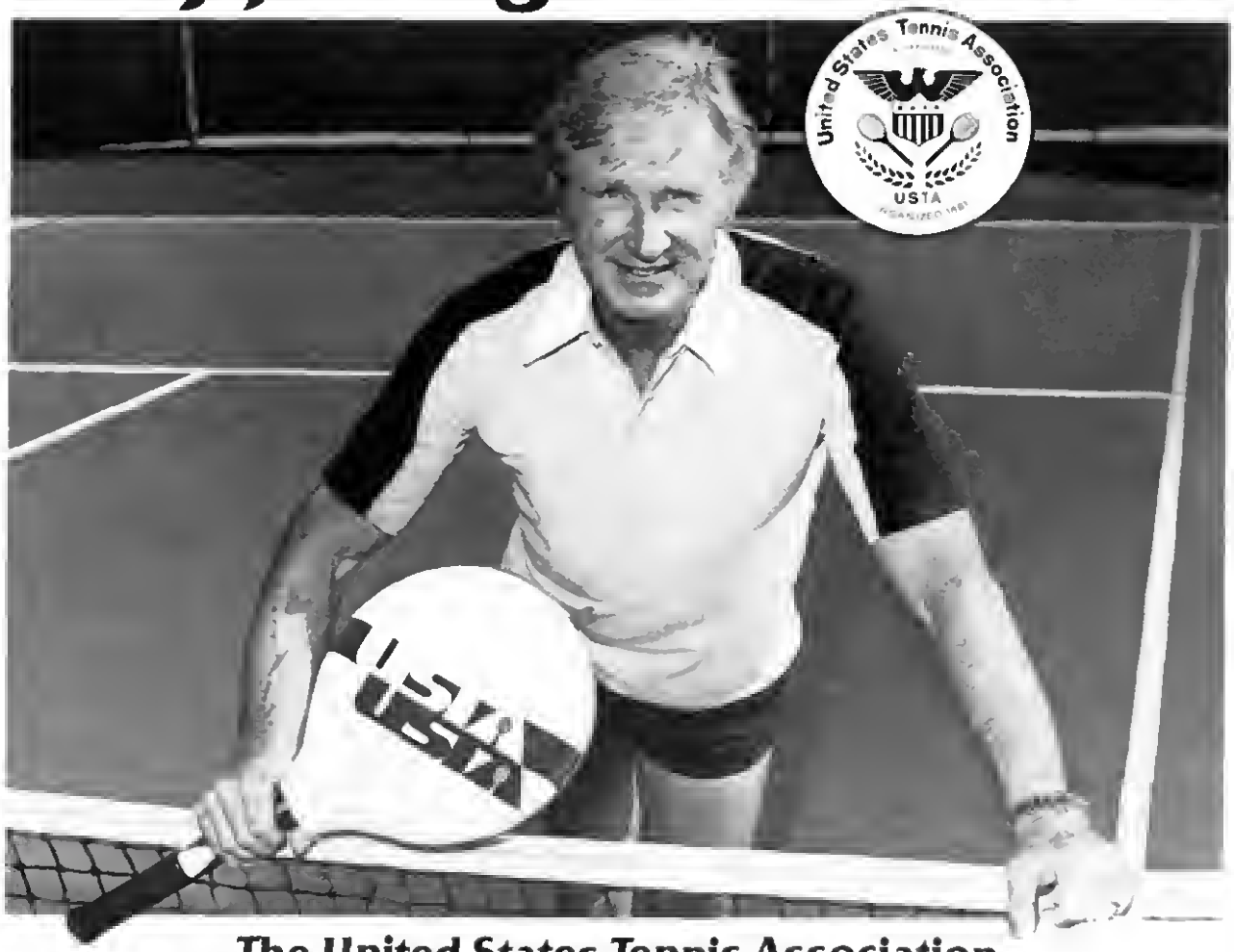
The place for roller skaters is Ocean Front Walk, an asphalt promenade in Venice. From dawn to dusk and even later on nights when there is a full moon, hundreds of skaters roll along. The rage



to skate began last year after Jeff Rosenberg, a bearded 23-year-old, chucked his job in a used-clothes store in Hollywood, bought 20 pairs of skates and headed for Venice, where he rented them from a van. "In two months things were going so good I opened my store," he says. The store is called Cheapskates, and Rosenberg rents skates for $1 an hour (75¢ on Sundays) and sells new ones for $69.50 a pair. Another store, the Venice Precision Roller Works, has opened two blocks away. A couple of gypsy renters work out of vans, and there are other rental operators along the 19 miles between Santa Monica and Redondo Beach.

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IN THE MIDDLE

When the NCAA put the University of Nevada, Las Vegas on probation for two years for alleged violations in its highly successful basketball program, it ordered the school to take disciplinary action against Coach Jerry Tarkanian or face further penalties (SCORECARD, Sept. 5). Last week Las Vegas suspended Tarkanian from his job as coach, reluctantly, according to campus talk. But with the NCAA looking over its shoulder, the university had little choice. Moreover, Las Vegas hopes to join the Western Athletic Conference in 1979, and if the NCAA were to extend the probationary period, Las Vegas' chances would be zilch.

No sooner had the university acted than Tarkanian, claiming that his constitutional right to due process had been violated, went into Clark County District Court, where he won a temporary restraining order prohibiting his suspension. Next week the court will hear his request for a permanent injunction. Tarkanian's case is directed against Las Vegas, but his *real target is the NCAA*. In his suit he charges that it used improper investigative tactics and disregarded an investigation by the Nevada Attorney General's office that concluded he was not guilty of the alleged NCAA violations. Tarkanian also maintains that NCAA investigator David Berst conducted a campaign to discredit him, and that Berst "offered and intimidated several parties into giving 'right' answers to questions which would help bury Tarkanian and the UNLV program." Tarkanian also contends that Berst and the NCAA have been out to "get" him since he left Long Beach State in the wake of recruiting violations there that resulted in NCAA probation for that school.

Whatever the merits of Tarkanian's charges, they have made Las Vegas a strange bedfellow of the NCAA. "We are now in the position of having to accept the NCAA findings as facts," says Las Vegas President Donald Baepler. "We are now going to pursue this case [opposing Tarkanian] vigorously through the courts."

REALLY?

Shepherd Mead, who wrote the best-selling *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, has a new book entitled *How to Succeed in Tennis Without Really Trying*. The contents do not exactly agree with the title. Mead advises the reader to run at least three miles a day, do 20 minutes of calisthenics, practice half an hour on the backboard and play at least two hours.

DOG TALES

Old books on dogs are undergoing a boom. Ten years ago there were two out-of-print-book sellers in the U.S. who specialized in dogs; now there are a dozen. The boom undoubtedly reflects the increased registration of purebred dogs by the American Kennel Club during the last decade. According to Carol Butcher, a bookseller in Youngstown, Ohio, interest is especially strong in books about Newfoundlands, bull terriers, borzois, Irish setters, Great Pyrenees, mastiffs and bull mastiffs.

Nevin E. Lyon, who sells dog books, paintings, prints and bronzes in North Hollywood, Calif., has noted the strong interest in the borzoi. A very fine copy of *Observations on Borzoi* by Joseph B. Thomas that was published in the U.S. in 1912 sells for $50 to $75, while one of *Lord George Scott and Sir John Middleton's The Labrador Dog, Its Home and History*, London, 1936, fetches (get it, retriever buffs?) $125 or more. "People who are seriously involved in their dogs are going back into history," says Lyon. "Yes, this is very much *the Roots* kind of thing, although this began before *Roots*. Everyone wants to know the history of his breed, to be able to say that his dog was known in the days of the pharaohs."

But not every dog is having its day. Mrs. Butcher reports that "Books on poodles, boxers and Boston terriers do not move," probably because so many books have been written about these breeds, and Lyon notes a swift decline of interest in books about the golden retriever, with President Ford out of office.

The most costly books are English. A very fine copy of Vero Shaw's *Illustrated Book of the Dog*, published in London in 1881, goes for about $400. Ten years ago a similar copy would have sold for $150. Edward Ash's two-volume study, *Dogs: Their History and Development*, London, 1927, brings $175 to $275 depending on condition, and *Hutchinson's Dog Encyclopedia*, three volumes, London, 1935-37, goes for between $350 and $400. Don't be fooled by Frank Forester's *The Dog*, first published in the U.S. in 1857. Unless it is a superb copy of the first edition, which may be of interest to a Forester fan, the book is worth $12.50 at best. It is, well, a dog.

SOLE SUPPORT

Every morning a U.S. Postal Service truck drops off hundreds of old tennis shoes at a building in San Jose, Calif. The building is not a Salvation Army depot but the headquarters of Tred 2, an unusual company that started with an investment of $37 in 1972 and now grosses $6 million annually.

Tred 2 is the brainchild of Rory Fuerst, who was thinking of going into the fast-food business until he happened to notice how many people were wearing tennis shoes in need of new soles. He gathered up some old tennis shoes and used his mother's oven to heat the soles to 375° so he could remove them. When the odor permeated the substantial family residence, Fuerst took over a guesthouse and used infrared lamps to loosen the soles from the shoes, which he had hung on ski poles. When he ran an ad in a tennis magazine, 1,900 old shoes poured in, and he founded Tred 2.

Today, the privately held company, which also makes its own line of footwear, is prepared to resole any brand of tennis or athletic shoes at a cost of $13 a pair. More than 100 employees work a four-day week on a computer-controlled assembly line handling up to 600 pairs of resoles daily. The computer keeps track of a customer's shoes from the moment they arrive until they are repacked fully repaired several weeks later. A first-time customer gets a new pair of socks free. There is a big repeat business because people just love their old tennis shoes. So far, one customer has had his resoled nine times.

THEY SAID IT

- Don Zimmer, Red Sox manager, asked why he arrives at Fenway Park as early as 1:30 p.m. for a 7:30 game: "I want to make sure nobody's in my uniform."
- Lee Rose, basketball coach at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte: "I would like to deny the statement that I think basketball is a matter of life and death. I feel it's much more important than that."
- Bill Lee, Red Sox pitcher who wears No. 37, asked about Detroit Tiger Pitcher Mark Fidrych, who wears No. 20: "We're on a first-number basis. He calls me 3 and I call him 2."

END



When E.F. Hutton talks, people listen.

Sports Illustrated
SEPTEMBER 19, 1977

FANTASTICO, GUILLERMO!

In a tense, 3½-hour struggle that ended in chaos, Vilas parried Jimmy Connors' best shots, then put him away to win the U.S. Open

by CURRY KIRKPATRICK





CONTINUED

In the event you were not a transsexual ophthalmologist or a ninth-grader with braces or a guy who defaulted with a collapsed shoulder or another guy who collapsed with a defaulted forehand; and provided you managed to avoid bomb threats, stray bullets, prayer vigils, spectator sit-ins, racial slurs and penalty points; and if you were able to overcome cynical remarks about your two-tone bowling shirts, your pink racket handles and your lack of guts, you might have won the wackiest U.S. Open of all last week.

You might have, that is, if your name was Guillermo Vilas and you came from Mar del Plata, Argentina and you were playing the best, most fearsome tennis of your life, tennis that all but dismantled the opposition and left eyewitnesses believing you might go on winning on clay forever.

But last Sunday afternoon down there in the pit of Forest Hills stadium, the 25-year-old Mild Bull of the Pampas used his head and his heart as if he had been born on nearby Queens Boulevard.

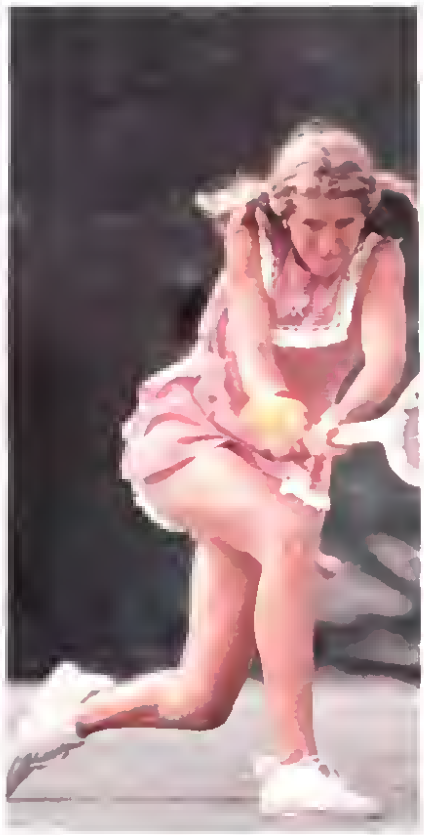
Behind in what seemed like dozens of crucial situations, and with none other than Jimmy Connors across the net in the final, Vilas held on through a dispiriting first set, turned tough and agressive in the second and snatched Connors' last remaining big title away from him by the astounding score of 2–6, 6–3, 7–6, 6–0.

If the final set went fast, it was nothing compared to the speed with which Connors' Sinatrian entourage cleared out of the West Side Tennis Club. As Vilas was being carried around the court on the shoulders of a delirious crowd, only eight minutes elapsed between the time Connors left the court and the moment he was driving away from Forest Hills searching for his lost forehand.

It was that forehand, which on approach shots he all too frequently hits low and into the net, that Bjorn Borg worked on to beat Connors at Wimbledon. Vilas chose to test it the same way, switching from his classic, looping, bolo-punch backhand to a softly sliced stroke that forced Connors up and into the middle of the court.

Early in the third set Connors had six opportunities in three different games to win his fifth game—the first would have given him a 5–1 lead in the set—but each time Vilas held firm. Still leading at 5–4, Connors had a couple of set points to put his left-handed adversary away again, but Vilas hurled an ace at him and then a backhand drive which Connors could not handle at net.

But with a chance to serve for the set himself, Vilas double-faulted and made three more errors to be broken back at 6-all. Surely now this sensitive poet and artist, who was under the immense strain of a 45-match, seven-tournament winning streak on clay, who was in against a street fighter he had never beaten and who had embarrassed him badly on this same surface last year—surely this Guillermo Vilas would be bullied again.



A winner if not a champion, Tracy wowed 'em

But he was not. "If I think back, I have to live back," Vilas said later. So instead he kept consulting with and accepting hand signals from his bearded, brooding Romanian mentor, Ion Tiriac, who glowered at courtside. Vilas kept pawing at his scraggly locks and adjusting his headband. He kept digging in and putting his own pressure on the defending champion until, remarkably, Connors, not Vilas, fell apart.

In the third set tie breaker Vilas took command and won it 7–4 after he blasted a forehand to the baseline tape and then covered a weak Connors' volley. Though nobody knew it then, the match was over.

"It was very important time for me," Vilas said later. "If Jimmy having trouble with forehand, I'm stupid not to play it. I was pushing him to miss the thing."

No kidding. In the last set Vilas aimed his chip shots to Connors' vulnerable left wing like a man floating darts at the corner tavern. "You like that shot?" Vilas was to ask later. "I practice that one

Surprising finalist Wendy Turnbull gave Evert first-set problems before bowing to the inevitable



nine hours or something last few days."

Connors' loss of his Open championship began with three forehand errors in the first game of the final set. He lost the third, fourth and fifth games on similar mistakes and then fell on the seat of his pants while skying still another pitiful forehand practically into the cheap seats.

The new champion won the whole thing when Connors drilled a forehand just wide which nobody knew was out until the linesman made a tentative gesture. Then pandemonium. Vilas jumped high in the air and the crowd swarmed onto the court and began tugging at his headband. "With my headband, my head was coming," he said.

Though Vilas started his wonderful clay court streak with a victory in the French Open in June, his record has been questioned because of the lack of big names across the net—namely Connors and Borg. But Borg defaulted in the midst of his fourth-round match at Forest Hills because of a shoulder injury, saying he "had not one percent chance" and Connors was unceremoniously driven out when he had all the chances in the world.

"I never got down on myself," Vilas said. "I am very good friend of mine. Now I think I have something to say about No. 1."

This almost certainly was the last U.S. Open in Forest Hills; the USTA has scheduled future Opens at a soon-to-be-completed multimillion-dollar complex in Flushing Meadow, the site of the 1964 World's Fair. If indeed this was the last hurrah for the Tudored, gabled, impossibly cramped West Side Tennis Club, it was from one point of view good riddance to bad rubbish. That is as accurate a description as any for the tennis that yawned its way from the fourth round until Vilas and Connors faced each other Sunday. Of the 30 combined men's and women's singles matches during that period, only four were anything more than straight-set routs, and one of those was Borg's default.

In the men's division, both Ilie Nastase and Brian Gottfried lost to Corrado Barazzutti, called *Soldatino*—the Little Soldier—in straight sets, Barazzutti winning 30 of 43 games. In the women's division Martina Navratilova and Wimbledon champion Virginia Wade lost to Wendy Turnbull of Australia and the late and great Minnesota Buckskins. "Wendy's not that good technically," said Wade, "but they don't call her Rabbit for nothing." Wade won three games in two sets. Rabbit, run.

These were just random samples of the kind of spine-tingling action that threatened to drive most observers to a mass reading of Bert Lance's financial statements for their excitement.

Chris Evert, of course, with her annual share of whompings, contributed to the boredom. "Why aren't you guys coming to my press conferences?" she asked two media friends early in the first week.

"Don't worry," they said. "We'll be there for the finals."

By that time Evert had lengthened her improbable clay court winning streak, taking her 113th straight match and 23rd straight tournament over four years. She also won her third straight U.S. Open. In the midst of all this, Chris had these quickie statistics: she won her first 12 points of the tournament; she won a match at love in 36 minutes; she won nine straight games from Billie Jean King and closed out their non-contest 6–2, 6–0; she skinned the Rabbit, Turnbull, in the final by 7–6, 6–2, and never once looked inspired. "Chris could play these things in her dreams," said Billie Jean.

"I'm thrilled about the clay streak,"

continued

Moments after winning her third straight U.S. Open championship, Evert let success go to her head





Playing in a fishbowl, Richards lost quickly in singles, but reached the finals of the women s doubles

said Evert. "Now I need new goals. I don't think I'll be in tennis a whole lot longer, but I'll stay till something better comes along." Waxing sentimental over Forest Hills, Evert said, "I'll never forget my first year here [as a 16-year-old schoolgirl she captivated New Yorkers by getting to the semifinals]. I feel sad this is the last Forest Hills."

The last Forest Hills also provided a barrel of firsts. This was the first Open to (sometimes) enforce the new penalty-point system, which discourages outrageous behavior. This was the first Open to be subjected to bomb threats and to a prayer vigil protesting the participation of South African players.

This, too, was the first Open to feature Mike Fishbach and his magic wand—a tennis racket strung with nylon monofilament fishing line, rope strands, tubing, adhesive tape and maybe a bit of pepperoni. The racket took Fishbach 30 hours to string. Then he went out and beat Billy Martin and Stan Smith before losing to John Feaver. "Of course it's legal," Fishbach said about the "spaghetti racket." "I could play with a shoe or a tree or a bottle of apple juice and it would be legal."

Undoubtedly this also was the first Open in which a spectator looked down to find a bullet wound in his leg. And the first in which a whole stadium full of anarchists refused to budge when told the matches were finished for the afternoon. "We won't go! We won't go!" they chanted, until tournament officials chose discretion over riot and ordered the Vilas-Jose Higueras match to be played as scheduled rather than during the evening session that followed.

Further enhancing the public relations between West Side and the tennis community was William McCullough, a member of the board of governors of the club, who called a press conference and proceeded to chastise the USTA for moving the Open next year to a neighborhood (Corona, Queens) which he said was 95% Negro. In fact, it is more than 80% white.

Arthur Ashe, the one black among West Side's 1,000 members (and he had to win the Open to get an honorary membership) labeled McCullough's remarks "institutionally racist" and said he would resign "as soon as my wife has her chance to play tennis on the grass." As it was, McCullough resigned as the club's chairman for the Open the next day.

What also kept the U.S. Open from wallowing in dullness, in light of the shortage of tennis drama, was the appearance of two people unique to their game as well as to big-time sport, Renee Richards and Tracy Austin.

Richards, the 43-year-old transsexual, was forced to sue to get into the tournament, primarily because of the women players' fear of the unknown, *i.e.*, her physical capabilities. But once her lack of mobility and unorthodox, off-the-wrong-foot forehand were exposed, her first-round loss to Virginia Wade by 6–1, 6–4 was predictable.

Wade's graceless prematch remarks—"I've practiced with a lot of 40-year-old men; if Renee beats me, she should be checked out"—became immaterial as the match progressed on the same stadium court where Richards had lost another first-round match in 1960 against another Wimbledon champion, Neale Fraser. Then, of course, she was a he, Richard Raskind.

Though she won 40% of the points against Wade, Richards admitted she "wasn't ready. I'd like to play down the zoo-like setting," she said. "Virginia played like a house afire."

Out of the spotlight, Richards fared better, reaching the finals of the women's doubles with Bettyann Stuart before losing to Navratilova and Betty Stove 6–1, 7–6.

The sideshow atmosphere of the women's draw continued as long as Austin, the 14-year-old from Rolling Hills, Calif. with the pigtails, braces and pinafores, continued to uncork two-handers and win matches.

"Are you seeing the sights?" somebody asked Tracy.

"I've been to New York 20 times before," she said. "I've seen it all."

In the biggest victory of her career, Tracy absolutely dismantled Sue Barker's vaunted forehand, worked on the Briton's nerves and won 6–1, 6–4. In the next round, against tough Virginia Ruzici of Romania, Austin did the same thing and prevailed 6–3, 7–5.

The veteran women had seen enough. "They're scared. I know I was," said

Evert, who beat Tracy at Wimbledon.

"The cute 14-year-old in pigtails—what a joke," said JoAnne Russell. "That's no kid's game she plays."

"I'm not fooled by those dresses which are supposed to make us think we're in against an 8-year-old," said Stove. "I hit with Tracy in practice. She hits a firm ball. She has bounce, guts, brains. Now that I think about it, what doesn't she have?"

In their quarterfinal match, what the 5' 1", 90-pound dumpling didn't have was enough strength, reach or experience to cope with a red-hot Stove switched to the "on" position.

A foot taller, 67 pounds heavier and 18 years older, Stove kept cracking flat, hard drives onto the lines and into the open spaces where Tracy just couldn't handle them. She lost 6–2, 6–2 and got ready to head back to Rolling Hills and the ninth grade.

"I didn't get tired," Tracy said afterward. "Betty just hit winners. I can hardly get her serve back. I'm still so little, you know?"

Well, we all know. But time flies. Even as Austin's party was ending, Ted Tinling, the tennis dress designer, said, "Her mother and I are preparing for the premeditated evolution of Tracy's character." Which can only mean that in a few years this darling little girl will be losing her braces, knocking down millions in clothing and toothpaste endorsements and promoting challenge matches against Steve Cauthen at Disney World.

That would be approximately in the same decade that Connors and Borg will have both keeled over from the sheer exhaustion of out-injuring one another. For a long while at Forest Hills, it seemed as if neither of the favorites would make it through another night, what with Connors' back "wrenching" apart by the minute and Borg's right pectoralis muscle, "exquisitely tender," according to an orthopedic surgeon, combining with tendinitis in his right shoulder. Of course, nobody believed any of this was on the level.

"Borg said the same stuff last year at Wimbledon and he served a dozen aces in the final," said Vitas Gerulaitis. "Connors is hurt in every tournament. He's the best hurt player in the world."

Harold Solomon even charged that Connors told him he was faking an injury to pull out of Boston and practice for Forest Hills. But when a female journalist quizzed Jimbo on the matter, His Gallantness snapped, "I wish you could crawl inside my back." Staring her up and down, Connors reconsidered. "No. Actually I want you in front of me."

Similar doubt surrounded Borg's injuries, which were publicly blamed on a pre-tournament practice session but more likely occurred while water-skiing with Gerulaitis. After the Wimbledon champion had patty-cake served through three matches to reach Dick Stockton, one writer cynically shouted, "Call me when the Swede's arm falls off."

That is about what happened at approximately 3 p.m. on Tuesday when Borg walked away from Forest Hills, carrying his limp right arm like a rag doll. Having split sets with Stockton, who was diligently lobbing to test Borg's feeble overheads, the No. 1 seed sat down on a changeover, gazed over at his coach, Lennart Bergelin, and indicated he wasn't able to continue.

"It's tough to take advantage of an injury when you're playing a nice guy like Bjorn," said Stockton. "But Bergelin practically told me to lob. They asked for it."

With Borg out, and thereby another dream final against Connors, with the Disco Kid, Gerulaitis, gone after having been overcome by Solomon's relentless gravedigger strokes as well as by his own silly tactics; with Stockton also outsmarted by the heady Solly, most attention centered on Manuel Orantes.

The cagey Manolo had destroyed Connors in the 1975 Forest Hills final with his slice and spin artistry and he had done it again four weeks ago in Indianapolis. But twice is quite enough. In a quarterfinal match under the lights, which loomed as the only suspenseful confrontation of the tournament until the finals, Connors took on the look of an enraged bull while Orantes resembled a crippled matador. From the time Jimbo started slashing groundstroke winners all over the place, to the climax when he volleyed setups into the damp green clay, it was no contest. Connors kept Orantes pinned way behind the baseline and won 6–2, 6–4, 6–3.

"If Pancho [Segura] says I'm playing better than '74, then look out," said Connors. "This is my home. I'm moving in here. I'm rollin'." During his easy semifinal victory over Barazzutti, in which the Little Soldier became MIA, Connors screamed to the crowd, "I'm the only one you got left in this tournament. Let's hear it for me."

What Connors chose to ignore was that Vilas was still very much in the tournament, too. Having lost only 28 games in 14 sets, and having disposed of Solomon in a brutal semifinal marred by post-match invective ("What impress me about Harold?" Vilas said. "His mouth. He talk very big. I think too big"), Guillermo was primed for Connors.

Earlier in the week Vilas had explained in his poet's way how it felt to win and win and keep winning. And he had said, "It is like a hungry man who never eats. Then he has piece of bread. Then sandwich. Then a steak. Then he wants to go to the palace."

On Sunday Guillermo Vilas arrived at the palace and Jimmy Connors heard from him. **END**

Shoulder aching, Borg defaulted in midmatch



NO, IT'S THE YEAR OF THE LIVELY BAT

The juicier ball is not explanation enough for the success Cincy's George Foster has had with his black bat. His strength and quickness may make him the second National Leaguer to have a 50-homer, 150-RBI season **by LARRY KEITH**

This may be the season of the lively ball, but in Cincinnati it is much more the year of the lively bat. The stick in question is a two-pound, three-ounce black bludgeon with a thin handle and a thick, forbidding barrel. It belongs to the Reds' Leftfielder George Foster, who at the end of last week had struck 46 homers, driven in 133 runs and produced a .313 batting average with it. There was not a bat in baseball with statistics close to those.

Although hitting and scoring have increased significantly in both leagues this season, individual sluggers—except for Foster—have not been fattening their totals all that much. His imposing numbers leave him virtually without competition for the major league titles in home runs and runs batted in. His nearest pursuers are Boston's Jim Rice with 38 homers, and Philadelphia's Greg Luzinski with 119 RBIs. That would seem to indicate that Foster's prodigious performance has been less the result of a juicier ball than of the singular blend of strength and skill with which he swings his black bat.

Just how formidable Foster has been is best shown by the company he may soon be keeping. Only four National Leaguers—Hack Wilson, Johnny Mize, Ralph Kiner (twice) and Willie Mays, who was the last in 1965—have hit 50 home runs in a season, and only six—Rogers Hornsby, Wilson (twice), Mel Ott, Chuck Klein, Joe Medwick and, most recently, Tommy Davis in 1962—have driven in 150 runs. Wilson of the Cubs was the only one of them to accomplish both feats in the same season (1930). At his present pace, Foster is almost certain to hit 50 or more homers, and he has a good shot at 150 RBIs.

With other sluggers far behind him and the Reds all but out of the race in the National League West, Foster is like a record-seeking distance runner who has lapped the field. He must run the rest of his race against the clock—or, in this case, the calendar. But Foster claims that he will not be concentrating on statistics between now and Oct. 2. He believes his preoccupation with them sent him into a tailspin at the close of last season, when he felt he needed to win the Triple Crown to become the National League's Most Valuable Player. As a result, he pressed too hard during the final month and finished with nothing but the RBI title. He doesn't have that problem this year; he could stop hitting today and still be the front-runner for the MVP award. Only a second-place finish by the Reds, a virtual certainty because they were 11½ games behind the Dodgers at the close of last week, stands in his way. The baseball writers who select the MVP usually lean to the star of a championship club.

"I get my satisfaction from within."



Foster is almost sure to become the first hitter since Willie Mays in 1965 to blast 50 home runs

Foster says. "If it doesn't happen this year, it could happen next year or the year after that. Some players make the mistake of setting limits on themselves. They hit 30 homers, and they're happy about it. But I'm not that way. I'm not elated by what I have done this year, because I don't know what I'm really capable of."

But while Foster is attempting to keep calm, his teammates, including Pete Rose, Johnny Bench and Joe Morgan, who are not easily impressed, are agog over his performance. "George is bleeping awesome," says Rose. "He makes me feel inadequate," says Bench. "I've never seen anything like this," says Morgan. No one on the Reds has. Though three of them have been MVPs in recent seasons, none has had a season to match Foster's. In an April game against Atlanta he had two home runs, seven RBIs and scored five runs. During a 14-game stretch in June he drove in 30 runs. He has hit two or more homers in eight games. Only once has he gone as many as three games without a hit. Foster never cools off, he merely simmers.

It took a few years for the pot to come to a full boil. As recently as 1973 Foster hit only .262 with 15 home runs in Indianapolis. He did not become a big league regular until two years ago, when Rose moved to third base so the 26-year-old Foster could play left field. "I could've told them to go to hell when they asked me to do it," says Rose, "but I felt George would help the team." The rest, as they say, is history. The Reds won the World Series in '75 and '76 with Foster hitting .300 and .306 and 23 and 29 home runs. This season he has improved so dramatically that Manager Sparky Anderson says, "Bench, Rose and Morgan are great players, but George has reached the point where he doesn't have to take a backseat to anyone. He's coming up to No. 1 fast."

Rose understands this better than most. Of the crowd reaction during recent batting practices, he says, "I used to think people cheered me pretty good when I went up to hit, but you should hear the excitement George causes now when he steps into the cage."

Although a proven .300 hitter, Foster is far better known for his slugging. "His homers are spectacular," says Bench, perhaps recalling Foster's two 450-foot blasts to the opposite field this June in Philadelphia. No other right-handed batter has ever hit even one like that at the Vet. "When he hits one, there's no doubt. It's just a matter of waiting for it to come down," says Ted Kluszewski, the Cincy batting coach who was himself a big bopper. "Foster can call on a dual source of power. Guys like me hit home runs with brute strength. Others like Henry Aaron did it with quick hands. George has both."

Part of Foster's advantage may be his body structure. He is proportioned like a heavyweight through the chest and shoulders, the better for those Kluszewskian muscle shots, but slims down to a 31-inch waist and narrow hips, which helps him get his body around quickly for those Aaronian wrist clouts. In fact, Foster is built like his top-heavy bat. Give the bat a lantern jaw and long muttonchops and you would have real trouble telling the two apart.

But physical assets are only one of the reasons for Foster's success. Few players have his ability to adjust their stances to different kinds of pitching. He crouches low against a sinkerballer, stands erect against a pitcher who throws higher deliveries and moves deep in the box against a fastballer. Like most good hitters, he has learned to swing slightly down on the ball. Perhaps most important is his attitude. "In the long run I'm different from other players because of my inner strength," Foster says. "I'll never lose my dedication." Or, as Rose puts it, "George has way more than average pride."

This pride can express itself in unusual ways, including Foster's reluctance to steal bases. Anderson believes that this may prevent him from becoming one of the game's elite.

"George has reached the point where he needs to ask himself, 'How great do I want to be?' " says Anderson. "He's totally conquered the hitting part of baseball, but I want him to become a more complete player. If he wants to, he can become a well-rounded star like Aaron, Mays and Clemente. And one of the most important things he's going to have to do is be more outgoing on the bases. He should be stealing 40 a year."

Foster has stolen only five bases this season. "To do something well you have to have confidence in it," he says. "I don't relax when I get the steal sign; I'm thinking about the possibility of getting hurt or worrying that the other team has stolen the sign and knows I'm running. If I can get to the base without sliding, fine." Pride, apparently, doth go before a fall.

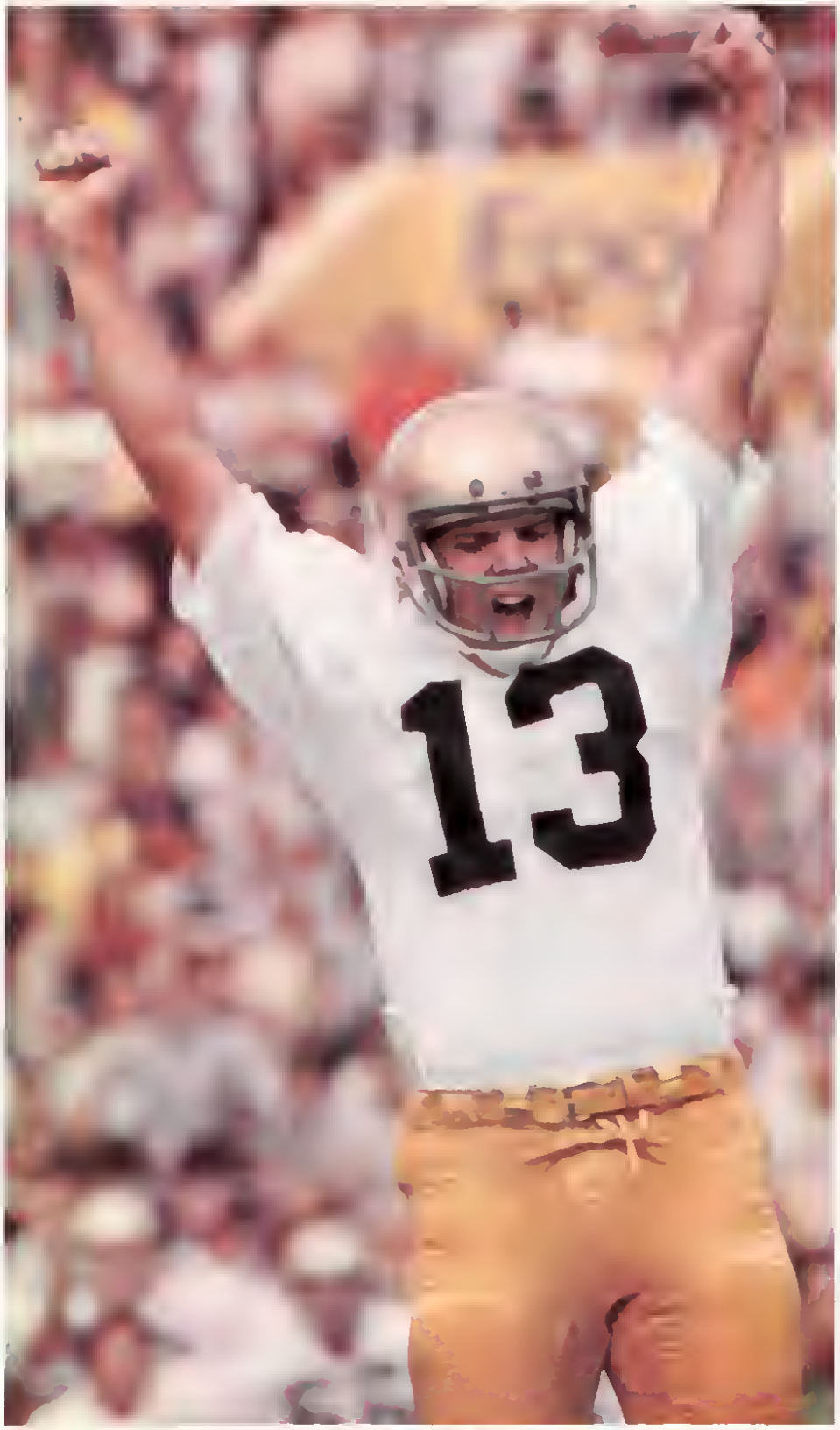
Dirty uniform or not, Bench is willing to grant Foster superstar status right now, but he does not think Foster will be accorded that distinction outside of Cincinnati unless he opens up—not on the base paths but in the clubhouse. "On the field George is of superstar quality," says Bench. "The players are aware of this, even if the fans aren't. Public relations have a lot to do with making a player a star. Recognition has come late for him, and he is just starting to break through the aura that surrounds some of the other players on the team. George isn't as outgoing as some of us, so he doesn't always get as much attention as he should."

This is why you are never likely to see Foster on television telling America that a man wants to smell like a man. He is shy and reserved and has little use for the glamour that comes with being a successful athlete. While Bench signs autographs and joshes with strangers, Rose makes his TV commercials and Morgan keeps his mouth motoring, Foster quietly goes his own way. And his path does not lead to any bars. He spends much of his spare time reading the Bible.

"George is not a sinner like the rest of us," says Bench. "You want to know who he took to Hawaii for that Superstars TV show?" says Rose incredulously. "His mother!" Says Morgan, "A man with George's good habits *should* hit 50 home runs."

All of which does not mean that Foster is humorless. Recently he has taken to explaining that his home-run output has increased "because balls that used to bounce off the walls are now bouncing off the seats." His black bat, he once proclaimed, was intended to integrate the bat rack. That may have been true, but these days it is segregating Foster from the rest of the hitters. They have been relegated to a class that is definitely separate, but certainly not equal to the one to which Foster belongs. **END**

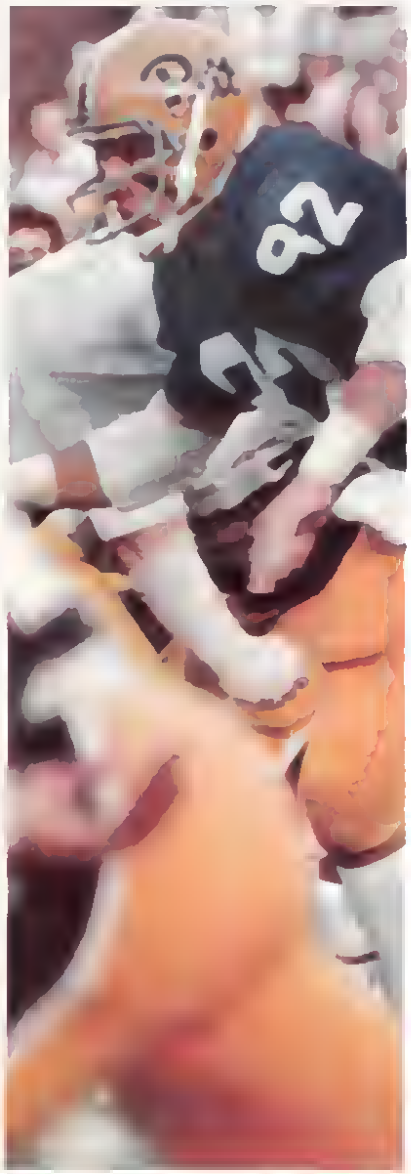
MAYBE IT'S



Reeve exults after kicking a 26-yard field goal, his second, to put the Irish ahead 12–9 with 5:42 to go.

Here is what happens when you eat your spinach and grow up to be No. 1 like Mother promised.

A few years ago, when the University of Pittsburgh was winning football games in bunches of one and two a season, a boosters' club was formed. The initial outpouring of support was 15 donors at $2 each, a $30 windfall. This year the boosters raised $287,000. The *nouveau riche* Pitt athletic department, in an example of football enhancing scholarship, contributed $100,000 to the library.



THE LUCK OF THE IRISH

Notre Dame needed every break, including the fractured arm of Pitt's talented quarterback, to beat the Panthers in a brawl **by JOHN UNDERWOOD**

Four years ago the Panthers quit holding pep rallies because nobody came. Last week for the opener with Notre Dame they had a pep rally *and* a bonfire. And the university chancellor, Dr. Wesley W. Posvar, a Rhodes scholar, gave a rousing speech in an example of scholarship enhancing football. And at the rally the school band, which once had to recruit from nearby Duquesne and Carnegie-Mellon to fill its ranks (with predictable anarchy in sound and march), was alive with quality tooters and bangers anxious to make the next bowl trip. And the cheerleaders, of whose female numbers it used to be said, "They do not cheer, they bark," were not only lovely but they were led by Miss Cheerleader U.S.A. herself, Susan Murphy.

And on Saturday when the Panthers went out to defend their first national championship in 40 years against the Irish, they did so before a sellout crowd of 56,500. In a stadium newly spruced and splashed with blue and gold paint. On a brand-new $300,000 carpet. Beneath a classy new scoreboard that could, in flashing letters, make announcements like ZOWIE! Not even an occasional and forgivable snafu (Pitt being unused to such high station for so long) could dampen the good feelings. Publicist Dean Billick's order for 15,000 pompons for the boosters turned up short, but in one box was a surprise allotment of 400 brassieres. Billick resisted the temptation to have the brassieres painted blue and gold for waving but could not resist saying, "This must mean it's Notre Dame or bust."

Bust, alas, is what it was. For purposes of future scoreboard programming, BUST! was a chillingly appropriate word. But so, too, would have been OOPS! And,

continued

With Cavanaugh out, Pitt fumbled seven times as backup Adams (10) had trouble handling snaps

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES DRAKE





Cavanaugh was hurt during a touchdown toss

ultimately, AAAGH! That Pitt's party and 13-game winning streak were spoiled there was no doubt. Notre Dame won 19–9. Whether the supposedly big, tough and insatiable Irish, themselves now heir apparent to No. 1, could have done it alone will, however, remain moot.

What Mother might have neglected to tell you was that staying No. 1 allows little margin for error, and even less for a truly bad break. Just when it appeared that the Panthers were going to get over the loss of a Coach of the Year (Johnny Majors) and a Heisman Trophy winner (Tony Dorsett) without missing a beat—just when it seemed they were on their way to an upset of Notre Dame—Pitt suffered a lulu. One that confirms the fact that nothing enhances bonfires, bowl trips and financial well-being like a healthy star quarterback.

The one player new Coach Jackie Sherrill had said all along was indispensable was Matt Cavanaugh. "Tough—and tough-minded," Sherrill said of the 6′ 2″, 215-pound senior. Cavanaugh's presence comforted his coach. A former Alabama fullback and linebacker, Sherrill delighted in telling how physical (and therefore un-quarterbacklike) Cavanaugh was. He admitted, chuckling, that as Majors' defensive coordinator he had tried to get the freshman Cavanaugh moved to linebacker "because he wasn't playing and he's too good an athlete to let sit." Besides, he said, your average quarterback doesn't lift weights or heft jackhammers in the off-season. Though mild mannered and well liked off the field, Cavanaugh was not averse to jerking helmets and kicking fannies in huddles to get attention.

Sherrill was blunt. With Dorsett gone, he had refashioned Cavanaugh as the central jewel of a pass- and option-oriented offense. Pressure? "He can handle it," said Sherrill. "A born leader."

With 1:28 to play in the first quarter, at the precise moment that he put Notre Dame in serious jeopardy with a touchdown pass, Cavanaugh went from candidate to casualty.

It was Pittsburgh's second possession of what was then a scoreless game. Cavanaugh had driven the Panthers from midfield to the Irish 12. Five times he had carried the ball, sticking his tough nose into pile-ups, running options from an exaggerated spacing in the Pitt line that, allowing for double-team blocking on the Irish tackles, isolated and neutralized Notre Dame's excellent defensive ends, Ross Browner and Willie Fry. Now, on third down, Cavanaugh dropped back to pass. His primary target was Split End Gordon Jones, running deep on the left side. Finding Jones covered, Cavanaugh broke from the pocket and raced to his right.

At that point he must have lost sight of Fry, looping in from the back, but he was safely ahead of him and sprinting out, looking downfield for the Pitt receivers on the right side. He might have run for some yardage, but Cornerback Luther Bradley blocked his path. He hesitated, and when he looked back to his left he saw Jones floating free in the end zone. He planted his right foot and threw.

Cavanaugh never saw Fry until his body came around after he threw the pass. The collision and the release of the ball were almost simultaneous.

Fry drove hard into the exposed front of the quarterback, toppling him backward with a legitimate tackle. Downfield, Jones was catching the spiraling pass as Cavanaugh instinctively thrust his arms back to cushion the fall. His left hand curled under as Fry smothered him. "I stripped him from the top down and drove his shoulders into the ground," Fry said. "I knew it was a good tackle."

Cavanaugh, in pain, stayed on the

continued



The Pitt defense tried to hold the line . . . it wearied, playing almost non-stop in the last quarter.

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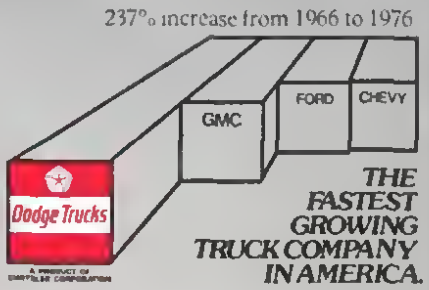
TEST GROWING
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ground, but only for a moment. Getting up, he ran directly into the locker room, cradling his left forearm. There followed a series of press-box and public-address announcements, each one more grim than the last. X rays revealed "a broken radius [a major bone that affects wrist rotation]." The crowd moaned when it was announced that Cavanaugh would be lost for six weeks. The team doctor later said a brace on the wrist might allow him to return earlier. Cavanaugh throws right-handed.

The injury had more than just a dampening effect on Pittsburgh's fans. It dampened the whole game, took the air from it like a puncture and doused it of its vitality. "Dull" is a charitable word to describe the last three quarters.

The drop-off in quarterbacking was pronounced and dire for Pitt. Behind Cavanaugh were two non-players (that is, quarterbacks who had seldom played), sophomore Wayne Adams and senior Tom Yewcic. It is no use to belabor the point because neither of them deserves condemnation, but there were immediate breakdowns. With the change in cadence, the Pittsburgh handoffs became cumbersome and perilous. Without Cavanaugh's run-pass ability, the option attack carefully designed for Notre Dame was not only diminished but also became nonexistent. From the time of Cavanaugh's exit, Pitt never generated more than 11 yards in total offense in any one of its next 12 possessions. Six of the last seven times it had the ball Pitt fumbled it away or was intercepted. Four times it lost the ball inside its own 26.

With Cavanaugh optioning off the ends from his wider-split line, Pitt had found a way to go on its TD drive. Notre Dame adjusted in the second half by splitting its own tackles wider and substituting two quicker ones, Mike Calhoun and Scott Zettek, for Ken Dike and Jeff Weston. That, together with the suddenly erratic Pitt ball exchanges and a growing inability to coordinate blocking assignments, was only part of the suffocating process. In the words of ex-Pitt publicist Beano Cook (now with CBS), the Irish defense is "a monster God created along with Hitler and the Great White Shark," and, though not much fun to watch, it should always be regarded as a menace to navigation.

It does not, and did not, in fact, make for an interesting game. *both* defenses were nothing if not brilliant. With

continued

HOW TO FEEL LIKE A MILLION.

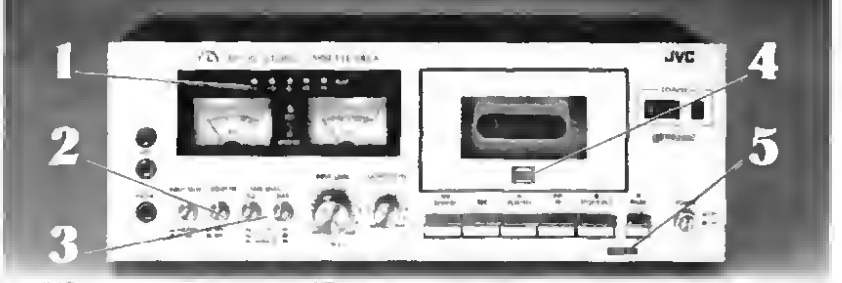


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Browner, Fry, Middle Guard Bob Golic and poaching Linebacker Doug Becker happily stuffing themselves down the barrel of every volley, Pitt got a net two yards from its offense in the second half. Notre Dame had more opportunity but did not get that much more proportionately because Pitt's version of the Monster Mash—Tackle Randy Holloway, End Dave DiCiccio, Middle Guard Dave Logan, Linebacker Jeff Pelusi—was just as touching and clutching.

As Sherrill predicted, without Cavanaugh Pitt's offense was "ordinary." Notre Dame Coach Dan Devine pointed out that his was pretty ordinary, too, but that his losses—four offensive starters, including 1,000-yard Halfback Al Hunter, via disciplinary action—had occurred *before* the season. Until late in the fourth quarter, Notre Dame's longest run from scrimmage in the second half was nine yards, and there was only one of those, by Fullback Jerome Heavens. There was no Irish passing attack to speak of. And if you spoke of it you wouldn't have much to say.

So that leaves an obvious-enough question to mull after a crucial first game. How good are the heirs apparent? Devine was not pleased by what he saw offensively. Except for an eight-play, 73-yard touchdown drive that beat the halftime clock and featured, in a stunning reversal of form, four straight completed passes by junior Quarterback Rusty Lisch, the Irish offense slugged along fitfully. Plays were tentative, and if there was imagination in their concept it was not evident in their execution.

Through it all, heroically, stood the Pitt defense, being forced to play a grisly kind of Russian roulette as its offense kept coughing up the ball and asking for another chance. During one stretch Notre Dame recovered fumbles on the Pittsburgh 26-, 16-, 16- and 11-yard lines. For all that opportunity, Notre Dame got very little. But very little was all it needed—a tying field goal of 35 yards by Dave Reeve early in the fourth quarter and a winning field goal of 26 yards by Reeve with 5:42 to play. The clinching touchdown (if you can call it that—Pitt wasn't about to score again) came on a drive of 11—count 'em, 11—yards with three minutes left.

This is Devine's third year. He lives daily with persistent reminders of his recent past—his ineffectiveness toward the end at Green Bay, his early problems at Notre Dame when fussbudget ways and lack of rapport with some players were roundly criticized. One former Notre Dame player was quoted early on: "When they made Joe Kuharich [a former and spectacularly fallible Notre Dame coach] they didn't throw away the mold, they used it to make Dan Devine."

Unfortunately, Devine continues to leave himself open for this kind of slander by lapsing, almost inexorably, into forced comparisons between himself and his immediate predecessor at Notre Dame, the Armenian Presbyterian, who happens to still live in South Bend. Devine does this while fussing around his office—straightening pictures and plaques, smoothing his sweater on a hanger, thumbing through neat stacks of letters from approving ex-players. Invariably at such times he drops ill-disguised hints that his record is every bit as good as Ara Parseghian's. Ara left him with practically nothing, the argument goes, and it is a sound one: 10 off Ara's last team (1974) were drafted by the pros, only three have been drafted since.

The fact is that Notre Dame football *has* been respectable under Devine—8–3 both years—and the Irish would have gone to major bowls both years if Devine had not let them vote "no" to the Cotton Bowl in 1975. Now it is conceivable he is on the verge of a national championship because of that monster defense and because from here on out the Irish play a one-game schedule: Southern California at South Bend on Oct. 22.

Devine is now proud to say that this is his team, not Ara's, and he is willing to stand on its accomplishments—or be blamed for its failures. Unfortunately, there is always somebody around to remind him that he is not Ara, and that at Notre Dame snafus are not forgiven.

Such a failing is Notre Dame's, not Devine's, of course, but he bears the brunt of it. An unconscionably cruel column appeared in a Pittsburgh paper the morning of the game. The writer, a Jim Murray faddist, could not bring himself to use Devine's name but did manage to suggest that Don Shula was more Notre Dame's type. Devine might well have read this with his game-day scrambled eggs, but Athletic Director Moose Krause warned him off it.

Spinach is one thing, slander is quite another. **END**



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A List of Naughty and Nice

In the NFL nice guys don't finish first. According to a straw poll of the players, Oakland is the most-hated team, Gene Upshaw the premier holder and George Atkinson the No. 1 cheap-shot artist. So the Raiders are expected to win the Super Bowl again

by Dan Jenkins



Until statisticians of the French Quarter have totaled up all of the divorces, empty wallets, instant wheelchair cases, kidnapped flower girls and lost rent cars at the end of Super Bowl Week next January, the answer to the biggest question in pro football this season—Will Al Davis have to build a two-ring garage?—may not be known.

By then, however, a great many other important things will have been determined. We shall have learned that:

Joe Namath either replaced Pat Haden as quarterback of the Los Angeles Rams or plunged headlong into show business by becoming the resident eel on *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau.*

Tony Dorsett became the best "spot player" Tom Landry ever coached.

Bert Jones sold the North Slope, bought United Artists, and returned the phone calls of Cyrus Vance, Carlo Ponti and Dolly Parton.

George Atkinson retired from the game to track down Nazi war criminals in Argentina.

O. J. Simpson stole the ball out of Joe Ferguson's hands

continued

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SANDY HUFFAKER



WASHINGTON'S ALLEN DOESN'T BITE THE HAND THAT FEEDS HIM

often enough to gain 2,546 yards and lead Buffalo to another 2–12 season.

Conrad Dobler so perfected his simultaneous neck bite and leg whip, it was adopted as universal therapy by the country's leading chiropractors.

The diamond-splattered, personally designed, 1977 Super Bowl ring of Oakland's Al Davis, largest of the XI, was subdivided and turned into condominiums and a shopping mall.

Atlanta owner Rankin Smith fired Leeman Bennett and replaced him with Bennett Leeman.

Johnny Rodgers and Joe Washington broke their legs in a violent collision at the Chargers' medicine cabinet.

Fran Tarkenton announced he would play only 10 more seasons, which he estimated would be enough for him to break Henry Aaron's home-run record.

Oakland's Gene Upshaw and Art Shell enabled Kenny Stabler to set a record of holding the ball aloft for 17 minutes before finding a receiver—who turned out to be Freddie Biletnikoff charcoaling a steak in Seattle's end zone.

When Ricky Bell was injured, Tampa's John McKay signed Grenny Lansdell, Orv Mohler and Cotton Warburton to round out his dream backfield with Anthony Davis.

In San Francisco, Executive Vice-President and General Manager Joe Thomas cut the 49ers' entire squad, hired 22 robots and called all of the signals himself on an electronic Pong machine in an office at the Pacific Bank of Commerce.

Both the New York Giants and New York Jets had starting lineups that no one in the NFL office had ever heard of.

Washington's Bill Kilmer passed for three touchdowns in a game against the Giants while being cranked into an upright position on his nursing-home bed.

Hank Stram invented the Notre Dame box.

A man named Bob (Red) Miller was revealed to be Denver's head coach.

At a football luncheon in Chicago, the Bears' Walter Payton ran out of a highlight film and sprayed roast-beef hash on six Kiwanis ties.

Agent Howard Slusher instructed all 1,260 NFL players to walk out on veal piccata and eggs Benedict—and play in Mozambique.

So much for the hard news. What of something perhaps more vital to the fan, to the man who has to live from Sunday to Sunday with little to chew on except injury reports and point spreads? What of the minds of the men who play the game that holds millions spellbound over their Hamburger Helper? What of the condition of the game itself?

With the interest of the fan in mind, we have conducted what can only be called The First and Last NFL Preseason Players' Straw Poll on Things Everybody Always Wanted to Know That Vince Lombardi Wouldn't Tell You—Plus a Lot of Other Outrageously Inside Stuff.

Here, then, are our carefully selected categories, results of the balloting, and the occasional comments of the head of the election bureau.

THE ABSOLUTE BEST FOOTBALL PLAYER ARDUND TDDAY, NOT DNLY TD BUILD A FRANCHISE AROUND BUT ALSD TD TAKE TO MOST ANY HDLLYWOOD PARTY

1. O. J. Simpson
2. Bert Jones
3. Chuck Foreman
4. Kenny Stabler
5. Roger Staubach

Not even close between O.J. and second place. As you might suspect, all of Staubach's votes came from Dallas. No other player was even mentioned, which may or may not come as a shock to Jerry Golsteyn.

THE ABSOLUTE BEST COACH AROUND TDDAY, NDT DNLY TO MAKE YDU A WINNER BUT ALSO TO MAKE YOU FDRGET HE MIGHT BE WEARING DOUBLE KNITS

1. Don Shula
2. Tom Landry

3. George Allen
4. John Madden
5. Chuck Knox

Shula was comfortably ahead. His support came strongly from within his division, the AFC East. Interestingly, Landry's came from well outside his own NFC East. Allen's support was fairly spaced. Some of the sentiment for Allen was based on his reputation for stroking the older players. Though one might be tempted to say they were being sarcastic, it must be reported that some Minnesota Vikings went for L. A.'s Chuck Knox.

THE COACH YOU WOULD MOST LIKE TO BEAT 66–0, OR WOULD ENJOY SEEING PUT OUT TO SEA ON A CEMENT-BOTTOMED SLAVE BOAT

1. George Allen
2. Hank Stram
3. Tom Landry
4. "Wherever Joe Thomas is"
5. "John Madden, but mainly because of Al Davis"

Maybe it's Hank Stram's vest and tie and his Offense of the '70s. Maybe it's Landry's hat. Maybe it is all the credit they've been given for inventing all the things they didn't invent—still, neither Stram nor Landry seriously challenged George Allen for first. It is a strange thing in football that dislike and respect sometimes go hand in hand. No one would ever say Allen wasn't a good coach. But, obviously, too many players have heard too many stories about Allen from Allen players—like how he might hold up a hand in the locker room before a game and say, with a pretense of emotion, "I'd cut this off right here to win this one today." It would always be the left hand, not the one he eats ice cream with.

THE MOST UNDERRATED, UNSUNG AND, IN ALL PROBABILITY, UNDERPAID PLAYER IN THE NFL

1. Charlie Waters, Cowboy free safety
2. Larry Brooks, Ram defensive tackle
3. Joe Ehrmann, Colt defensive tackle
4. Jethro Pugh, Cowboy defensive tackle
5. Ken Mendenhall, Colt center

Dozens were mentioned but Waters, Brooks and Ehrmann stood above the rest. As good as he is, Waters never seems to be as visible as his All-Pro teammate, Cliff Harris. The same goes for Ehrmann, with John Dutton stomping around. Brooks now has it better because Merlin Olsen has retired.

THE NO. 1 CHEAP-SHOT ARTIST IN THE GAME, WHICH DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN HE WOULDN'T GIVE A LADY FLOWERS ON MOTHER'S DAY

1. George Atkinson, Oakland
2. Conrad Dobler, St. Louis
3. Zeke Moore, Houston
4. Bill Bradley, Minnesota (traded from Eagles)
5. Doug Plank, Chicago

A landslide for Atkinson, whose licks on Lynn Swann and Russ Francis happened to be shown vividly on TV. One of Atkinson's teammates had a nice vote in rebuttal. "Try the whole Pittsburgh team." Other players specifically mentioned were Dwight White of the Steelers, Jack Tatum of the Raiders, Greg Brezina of Atlanta, Ken Houston of the Redskins, Wally Hilgenberg of the Vikings and Eddie McMillan of Seattle. It should be pointed out in defense of all gentlemen who pursue ballcarriers and pass receivers that what is sometimes a cheap shot to one man is second effort to another.

THE BEST AND MOST EFFECTIVE HOLDER IN ANYBODY'S OFFENSIVE LINE, AND NOT JUST BECAUSE HE COULD PULL AN ELEPHANT ACROSS TIBET

1. Gene Upshaw, Oakland
2. Conrad Dobler, St. Louis
3. Gene Upshaw, Oakland
4. Ralph Neely, Dallas
5. Gene Upshaw, Oakland

Upshaw voted for himself. Although Upshaw thought Do-

continued

OAKLAND'S UPSHAW WAS A HANDS-DOWN WINNER AS BEST HOLDER



bler was overrated as a holder, a number of Cardinals voted for him. And a member of another team said, "Conrad is the only guy in the league who can bite, hold and leg whip at the same time, proving how agile he really is." One other was prominently mentioned—Art Shell of the Raiders.

YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT, THE MOST OVERALL HATED TEAM BY ANY SPORTSMANLIKE AND FAIR-MINDED COMPETITOR

1. Oakland
2. Pittsburgh
3. Washington
4. Dallas
5. Detroit, Houston (tie)

Nothing surprising about the winners being on top, but what did the Lions and Oilers ever do to offend anybody?

THE WORST CITIES TO SPEND THE NIGHT BEFORE A GAME IN, OR EVEN TO FLY A HOLDING PATTERN OVER AND THINK ABOUT

4. Louisiana Superdome (Saints)
5. San Diego (Chargers)

WORST STADIUM TO PLAY IN, EVEN IF SOMETHING GOOD HAPPENS

1. Memorial (Colts)
2. Shea (Jets)
3. Astrodome (Oilers)
4. Candlestick Park (49ers)
5. Philadelphia Veterans (Eagles)

Kansas City's stadium won the best as handily as Baltimore's captured the worst. Even the Colts voted their own the worst. Which one do the champion Raiders like the least? Philadelphia.

POUND FOR POUND, CRUDE FOR CRUDE, AND FELONY FOR FELONY, THE WORST COLLECTION OF FAN RABBLE

1. Philadelphia
2. And no one



ON THE WHOLE, THE VAST MAJORITY OF PLAYERS IN THE NFL WOULD RATHER BE DEAD THAN IN PHILADELPHIA

1. Green Bay
2. Buffalo
3. Cleveland
4. Detroit
5. Cincinnati

An inspired list that hardly any discerning individual could quarrel with.

BEST STADIUM TO PLAY IN, REGARDLESS OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN

1. Arrowhead (Chiefs)
2. Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum (Rams)
3. Texas (Cowboys)

3. else even
4. close to being
5. in contention

If there was a runner-up, it was Buffalo.

BEST UNIFORM TO WEAR IF YOU CAN'T BE A GUARD AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

1. Dallas Cowboys
2. Los Angeles Rams
3. Seattle Seahawks
4. "Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders"
5. "Their mothers' jeans"

A shocking runaway for the royal blue, metallic blue and

continued


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white, the same colors worn by Micki, Misty, Sandi and Ginger. Votes were also cast for the dreariest uniforms. The Chicago Bears and New York Jets tied. It was a hard defeat for the rooters of Oakland's soot and silver to accept.

BEST TV ANNOUNCER FOR FOOTBALL ONLY (NO POINTS FOR PAIRS ICE DANCING)

1. Frank Gifford and Don Meredith (tie)
3. Keith Jackson
4. Pat Summerall
5. John Brodie

Something like a 75-yard pass play separated Gifford and Meredith from all the others receiving votes, of which there were just those three mentioned. In the balloting for the worst announcer, Howard Cosell got as many votes as Gifford and Meredith got together for being the best, indicating that Cosell may be on more minds than any other announcer, beloved or not. So who's the real winner journalistically? Overall, a promo for Monday Night.

The players were asked for votes and comments in several other categories, the hope being that here and there, as in the above, some faint ray of light would pierce the season's darker mysteries—provide a mere hint, a delicate clue, an accidental subtlety, which might in turn give the fan some deeper insight into the 1977 season. Or that there might be some rare awakening of the kind that generally comes to a man in the form of a dreamy, distant voice, which seems to be saying, "Take Minnesota, give the three."

But there was nothing else, really, that you would want to carve in Jimmy the Greek's forehead, or tell Phyllis George at dinner. We asked who the all-pro complainers were. We got Oakland's Mike Siani, who doesn't like playing behind Biletnikoff. We got Baltimore's Roger Carr, who likes to negotiate his contract in the newspapers. We got New England's Bill Lenkaitis, a practicing dentist who has earned the nickname "Dr. Bitch" when it comes to the subjects of tape, food, weather and travel arrangements, etc.

We asked where the best groupies were, and found them in the same old places—New York and L.A. Was there a favorite hotel aside from the Crown Center in Kansas City? Yeah, "Any of 'em with X-rated movies in the room," said one voice. Hangouts? Same as always: Chili John's in Green Bay, The Left Guard in Bloomington, the Old Absinthe House on Bourbon Street, and any Marriott coffee shop.

Was there a Best Dressed award to present? No. Nothing like the title Pittsburgh's Frenchy Fuqua once held. Even Fuqua says he has a "current hold on style." Cedrick Hardman's $2,000 sequined overalls are a thing of the past. And what good is Lemar Parrish's mink coat if no one in Cincinnati knows what a mink coat is? Now it is either tailored suits and briefcases or pressed country and Western.

Nor are there any legendary hogs nowadays. The only serious nominees to reach our attention are Baltimore Defensive End Ron Fernandes and Pittsburgh's Ernie Holmes.



ONLY THE BUCKINGHAM PALACE GUARDS OUTDRESS THE COWBOYS

In that regard, the Oct. 30 meeting of those two teams might especially recommend itself to gourmet fans, for it will match Fernandes, who has disposed of seven T-bones in a single sitting, against Holmes, who at one meal inhaled three New York strips with a dozen eggs.

Be kind to the 1977 schedule, by the way. Clip, save and caress it. It is the last of the 14-game regular-season slates. Starting next year, 16 games. Now study the schedule carefully for that one last intangible to hang your parlays on.

Ah, yes. There it is. Look at Oakland. Don't the Raiders like natural turf? Well, they get 12 of their 14 games on grass. How about Dallas? Don't the Cowboys prefer artificial surfaces? Well, they play 12 times on a rug.

If these circumstances have anything to do with getting Oakland and Dallas to what will be the insanity of New Orleans in January, it will be no surprise to the betting man.

The intangible was right there—as plain as the ice rink on Al Davis' finger.

CONTINUED

"It was never like this at Pittsburgh," groaned Tony Dorsett as he suffered through the rigors of his first Dallas training camp. Despite his million-dollar contract, Dorsett was mistreated like every other NFL rookie. But by the time camp was over, it was clear he was going to provide a treat for Cowboy fans.

by JOE MARSHALL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WALTER IOOSS JR





Under the lights of the New Orleans Superdome in the early evening hours of Jan. 15, 1978 Tony (TD) Dorsett, No. 33, rushes for a record 303 yards, scores seven touchdowns and leads the Dallas Cowboys to a 49–3 rout of the New England Patriots in Super Bowl XII. "It was just like another day against Notre Dame," the jubilant Dorsett gushes to Phyllis George after the game.

That is the fairy-tale ending to the story of Dorsett's first NFL season. In the preceding chapters Dorsett (now pronounced DorSETT) steals the NFL rushing title from O. J. Simpson and, of course, wins Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player honors. Is this, perhaps, expecting too much? Apparently not, or so it would seem from the amount of media attention Dorsett's getting. It didn't make any difference this summer if he broke a long run, a whiskey glass or curfew. If Tony Dorsett did it, it was news. Dorsett's transition from a Pittsburgh Panther to a Dallas Cowboy, from a Heisman Trophy winner to an untried NFL rookie, is being chronicled in the minutest detail—*e.g.*, "At 7:21 a.m.

TONY D COMES TO BIG D

Tony Dorsett spread a teaspoonful of sugar substitute over his Special K." The only thing Dorsett has failed to do in Dallas so far is replace the Cowboy cheerleaders in the hearts and minds of the city's fanatical football followers. But give him time.

In truth, Dorsett by himself would not have attracted all this attention. What has made him a media event is the fact that he is a Dallas Cowboy. When Simpson came into the NFL eight years ago, he, like most high draft picks, had the misfortune of joining a losing team. Buffalo had won just one game the previous season. But Dorsett signed on with a team that has made the playoffs 10 of the last 11 years, a team that is annually the favorite for the title in the NFC East.

What's more, Dorsett brings to Dallas the single ingredient the Cowboys have lacked in recent years: speed in the offensive backfield. The Cowboys have always had the fastest linebackers and the fastest linemen in football. Curiously, they have also always had some of the slowest backs in captivity. No more. At Pitt, Dorsett's speed, quickness and shiftiness made him the leading rusher

continued

in history. He was the first player ever to have four 1,000-yard seasons and the first to rush for more than 6,000 yards in his career. He won the Heisman and led the Panthers to the national championship. For Dallas, Dorsett could well mean victory in the Super Bowl.

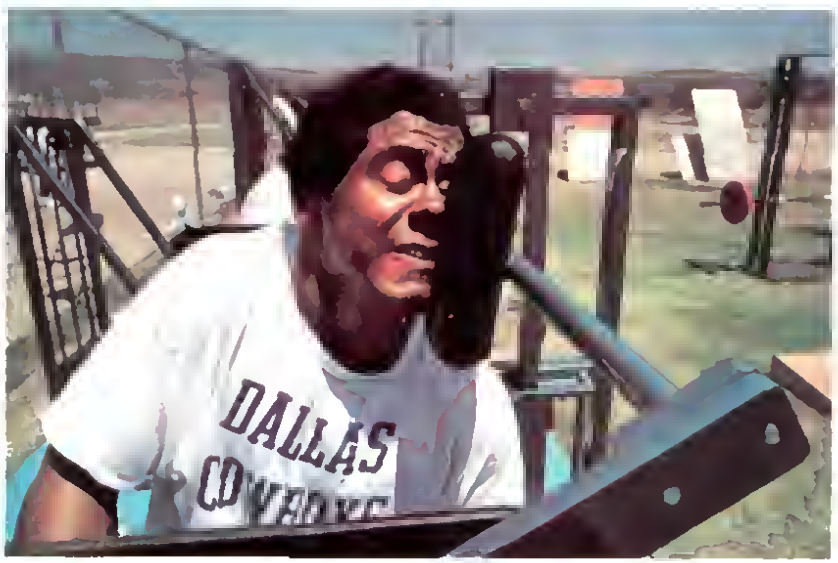
Dorsett seems typecast for the hero's role. He is handsome and affable, quiet but articulate. At the Cowboy training camp in Thousand Oaks, Calif., he unhesitatingly sacrificed his spare time to a demanding press. In the humble manner of the storybook all-American boy, he lavished attention on the children who hounded him for autographs. At times, though, he seemed incapable of performing his assigned part as the Cowboys' shining knight. Indeed, there were moments when the Dorsett story looked like a downer—a tale of disappointment, of questionable dedication and durability.

Dorsett himself occasionally seemed depressed. Sitting at breakfast one morning in the fifth week of training camp, he suddenly and without prompting voiced his frustration. "I'm not accustomed to being second, third or fourth," he said. "Here I'm playing behind all the vets. It's disappointing. What can you do in training camp? You can't show anything on the practice field. You have to wait for the preseason." Pointedly, he massaged the bruised left knee that had limited his playing time in Dallas' opening exhibition and would make him a spectator for the second. Then he added disconsolately, "I haven't done anything to deserve to move up."

In fact, Dorsett did plenty to deserve to move down. His misadventures started shortly before training camp when he made headlines for the first time in his pro career. Trouble was, he did his scrimmaging not on a football field but in a Dallas disco. Two charges of simple assault were filed against Dorsett, one by a bartender, the other by a barmaid. When Dorsett arrived in camp, one of his new teammates greeted him as "Ali Jr." On the second day of practice he was detected dogging it during a drill and had to run a penalty lap. The first night the players did not have meetings Dorsett missed curfew, offering the lame excuse of a traffic jam. He was roundly hooraheed by his fellow rookies for lack of originality, and Coach Tom Landry fined him $87.50—half the standard levy because the Cowboys' full squad still had not reported. "With his bankroll, he can afford it," said rookie Placekicker Leonard Allen.

Then, on the second carry of his first intersquad scrimmage against the San Diego Chargers, Dorsett hurt his knee. He is small by NFL standards—standing just a fraction over 5′ 10″ and weighing only 188 pounds—and his durability was the sole concern of the Cowboys when they drafted him. For a moment the Cowboys and their prize rookie held their breaths. "A lot of pain shot up in my leg," said Dorsett. "I thought it was serious enough to take me to the table." The injury was not serious, but it limited Dorsett's practice and playing time for four weeks. After the scrimmage Landry noted cheerlessly, "Dorsett's going to be a great back



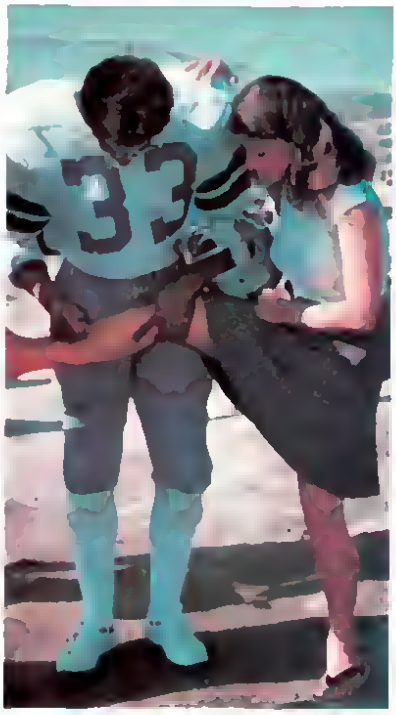


. . . if he can stay healthy. You've got to stay healthy. That's what the NFL is all about."

Dorsett's life as a Texas millionaire got off to an agreeable start. Shortly after the draft he signed a five-year, $1.1 million contract package with the Cowboys, and while No. 1 draft choice Ricky Bell managed to pry $1.2 million from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Dorsett is not complaining. As part of his contract, Dorsett received a stupendous bonus from the Cowboys—reportedly $600,000—and the payments have been spread out in such a way that he will still be receiving bonus money in 1996.

Anticipating the lucrative contract,







Dorsett bought a dove-gray Continental with "TD" in ornate burgundy script near the handle of each door. Then he bought a motorcycle. "For gas economy," he says. "I've always been good with money." Dorsett told Mary Elson of the Dallas *Times Herald*. "No matter how much I've had, I've never gone out and thrown it around. And I'm not throwing it around now. But I'm getting so many things I've always wanted." He picked out an $80,000 house for his parents in Aliquippa, Pa., and rented a posh apartment for himself in Dallas. He also has talked about building a mansion with tennis courts, a swimming pool and a few horses on a couple of acres in Dallas. "I don't think I need anything else," he said.

But then came Thousand Oaks. Life at the Cowboy training camp had all the charm of basic training, and Dorsett did not receive any preferential treatment. He flew coach from Dallas to California, not first class, and at the Los Angeles airport he had to wait 45 minutes until the Cowboys had collected enough rookies to fill a bus for the hour trip to the training site at California Lutheran College. The Cowboys make room assignments for rookies on an alphabetical basis, and Dorsett shared a three-room suite with James Cross, Steve Deberg, Dennis Dedrick and Anthony Evans. Beds were chosen on a first-come, first-served basis, and Dorsett, the last to arrive, got the worst location—alone, in the front room, with all the traffic passing by. His room was bare except for a cot.

Like his teammates, Dorsett was awakened at seven each morning, went to a mandatory breakfast, practiced, went to a mandatory lunch, practiced, went to a mandatory dinner and, finally, attended meetings that lasted too late for him to do much of anything before the 11 p.m. curfew. Whatever free time he had each day was spent answering the same questions he had answered the day before. Invariably, Dorsett was the last Cowboy to arrive at the dining hall for lunch and dinner. Dorsett's trademark in camp was a hat. He had several: a Thousand Oaks All-Star baseball cap given him by Rudy Aguilar, a 12-year-old local boy whom Dorsett had befriended, a baby-blue Budweiser baseball cap he picked up on a visit to a local liquor store; and his favorite, a yellow visor with a hawk stenciled on the bill. "Hawk" has been Dorsett's nickname since childhood. Originally it was "Hawkeye," for his big eyes.

On the practice field Dorsett always seemed to be suffering. No player likes two-a-days, but Dorsett, probably because he felt like a secure millionaire, was the only rookie who didn't bother to hide his feelings. "I've never been a gung-ho type," he said. "If I'm on the field I work hard, and if I get tired you know it because I complain." During laps at the end of practice Dorsett would grumble audibly. "I'm no marathon man," he muttered one day. His gait for these runs, all of which were done at a defensive lineman's pace, was a sort of stiff shuffle, as if the day's work had left him painfully sore.

At the weight-lifting sessions which usually followed the laps, Dorsett would moan, groan and roll his eyes. Over dinner the second day Dorsett said he had already lifted more weights as a Cowboy than he had in his entire life. "I'm too tired to do anything but drink liquids," he announced. "The only thing I can move is my eyes." When Aguilar told Dorsett, "You look tired, you look sore, you move so slow," TD smiled at the accuracy of the observation. "Well, you got to move slow," he said. "There's an energy crisis, you know."

Nor was Dorsett enamored of the isolation of the Cowboys' training site, which seemed 18 light-years—not 18 miles—removed from the delights of Malibu. "I didn't expect training camp

continued

In camp Dorsett learned how to block the Landry way, worked on the neck-building machine, lifted weights until he was pooped, satisfied the whims of autograph hounds, took a dip so physiologists could measure his body fat and spent endless hours studying the Cowboys' complicated playbook. He also learned how to break curfew



to be this far out in the boonies," he said "This is no-man's-land. That's the way it was in college, too, but there we spent only two weeks in camp Here it's six." At the end of the first full week Landry gave the rookies a free day on Sunday. Dorsett planned to play beach bum at Zuma Beach with some of the other rookies, but he overslept and missed the bus. So he slept in all day instead.

Dorsett's mood brightened only when the landscape was dotted with females. Approaching a pretty girl on the sidelines one day, Dorsett asked, "Can I have your autograph?" Questioned about his serious demeanor throughout the trip to Dallas for the first preseason game, Dorsett replied, "I don't usually do a lot of smiling unless I see some beautiful young ladies." Had he seen any? "No, I wish I had. It might have been a little easier out there." If that is the case, the Cowboys would be wise to have their cheerleaders face the field—and not the stands—during the Dorsett years

Dorsett's presence at Thousand Oaks was a daily media event on the scale of a Presidential press conference. Dallas officials arranged a mass interview session for Dorsett on his first camp day, hoping that they could eliminate the media blitz in one big swoop. But Dorsett proved so engaging, so quotable and seemed so at ease with the press that the requests for interviews doubled almost daily.

What did he think would be a successful season? "One thousand yards would be successful, but if I'm out there starting the opening game, I'm hoping to surpass 1,500 yards. O.J. and Walter Payton, they're going to have a little competition." Did he feel the barroom incident in Dallas had hurt his image? "In that incident I just had to protect myself. The people that know me know I'm a nice guy," Then he smiled before continuing, "Don't I look like a nice guy?" Was his contract filled with incentive clauses? "Incentive clauses are in every pro contract. Mine is no different." Clearly Dorsett was a man who had met—and mastered—the press before. When he had answered everything imaginable, Dorsett politely asked, "Is that all?"

After his first press conference, Dorsett had an EKG exam. His heart registered 100 beats per minute, a rate that reflected his nervous state. "I'm still a little shy in interviews," Dorsett said, "but football has helped me break out of my shell. I realized long ago that if I was going to continue to have success on the field, I'd have to be successful off the field, too. Otherwise people would say I was just dumb. If you're good with the press, they write good things about you." He paused for a moment. "Sometimes I sort of regret being who I am. I enjoy being who I am . . . but sometimes it hurts. I'm constantly watched, and I have to act. I can't be myself. Sometimes I wish I weren't Tony Dorsett,"

Dorsett's every move on the practice field was covered in elaborate detail, as if the nation was waiting for him to per-



Coming off the bench in the second half of his first game in Dallas, Dorsett dazzled the crowd with his speed to the outside before suffering a minor knee injury.

form a miracle during calisthenics or handoff drills. Still cameras clicked constantly. One day, after Dorsett had lifted his last weight, he leaned on the barbell, sweat pouring off his face, and told a photographer good-naturedly, "All right. I'm done posing." Joked Backfield Coach Dan Reeves, a good Cowboy running back in the late '60s, "I want to renegotiate. I just want the money they spend taking pictures of him."

SETT," Landry bellowed through a bullhorn from a distant scaffold, immediately settling the issue of the proper pronunciation of the rookie's name, "Get your head up. Look him right in the numbers."

When Quarterback Roger Staubach arrived, he professed a greater interest in Dorsett's hands than in his feet. "I'm anxious to see him catch the ball," he said. "The halfback is a key element in a passing game. Tony could really help us more blocking than I did in my whole career at Pitt. I never threw the ball in college, and did it only once in high school. I almost got the receiver killed. It was one of those straight-up jobs."

Still, it was Dorsett's running that turned the heads of the Cowboys' coaches. "I saw his ability when he was running routes against linebackers on the first day he worked out down in Dallas, about six weeks before training camp,"



Resting his knee after gaining 26 yards in seven carries, TD received encouragement from Quarterback Roger Staubach and Linebacker Thomas Henderson

Following TD's first play in a Cowboy practice, Dallas President-General Manager Tex Schramm flashed a pontifical smile. "Let the record show," he intoned, "that on Tony Dorsett's first play as a Cowboy, he blocked." Dorsett blocked on the next five plays, too, prompting a Dallas newspaperman to demand of Schramm, "How do you explain paying $1 million for a blocking back?" In the second workout that day Landry surveyed the other 66 players on the practice field and singled out Dorsett for his blocking technique—or lack of it. "Dor-

there, particularly with short passes on first down. It really helps your offense if you can get five yards on first down. One of my problems last year was that I didn't have enough confidence in throwing to my halfbacks."

Dorsett pleased Staubach and the coaching staff with his pass-catching ability and other unexpected football talents. In one scrimmage he suddenly pulled up and completed a long, perfectly thrown pass for a 63-yard gain. Assessing his new responsibilities, Dorsett said, "I blocked at Pitt, but in one week here I've done

said Reeves. "He was getting open without using fakes. He would just accelerate away from them. He was a blur against the linebackers. I had never seen anyone turn it on like that. I've never been on a team with or coached a back with Dorsett's speed—4.45 for the 40. That's flying."

There is an unmistakable style to Dorsett's running, a trademark grace that will make him distinctive among NFL backs. His motions are fluid, so fluid that it looks as though he could balance a bowl of soup on his head while moving with the

continued

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Dorsett never wilted under an all-out blitz from the media

ball. Reeves marveled at Dorsett's ability to cut at full speed "Very few players have ever had the skill and balance to change direction without loss of speed—only O. J. Simpson, Gale Sayers and maybe one or two others, and even Sayers cut kind of jerky. Tony does it so smoothly." Like Simpson, Dorsett runs better to his right. And in the open field he still holds the ball out like the proverbial loaf of bread, a habit that turns Landry's face white. Dorsett's most dazzling move in camp was his routine 360-degree, full-speed-ahead spin. "I see a guy, and if I can spin on him, I spin," says Dorsett. "If you do it wrong, you get hit dead center in the back."

While Landry says he is not redesigning the Cowboy offense to fit Dorsett's talents, he doesn't intend to misuse TD the way O.J. was mishandled in his first few years at Buffalo; the Bills sort of ignored O.J. the runner and relied on their passing attack—with disastrous results. Landry simply believes that the plays in the Cowboy book will work for Dorsett. "If you have a top back, the theory is to give him the ball," says Landry. "I've built my offense around 1,000-yard runners before. I built it around Duane Thomas and Calvin Hill."

Dorsett's official Dallas debut in the exhibition opener against San Diego was almost another misadventure. He was nearly a no-show. Playing cards with friends at his apartment, he let the time slip away and left for the game much later than he had intended. Encountering the standard traffic jam around Texas Stadium, Dorsett began to think, "Oh, no. Here we go again." Panicking, he used side roads, cut across parking lots, did anything he could to get closer to the stadium. Then, turning over the wheel to one of his passengers, Dorsett ran the rest of the way. He entered through the band's gate and climbed down through the stands. Before a bewildered group of early-arriving fans who didn't realize they were witnessing TD Dorsett's premiere as a Cowboy, he sprinted the length of the playing field to the locker room. Playing it cool, he pulled up short, gathered his breath and sauntered in almost as if nothing were amiss. He was five minutes late. No one said a thing. And Landry did not fine him.

Moments before the opening kickoff the Cowboy scoreboard listed Dallas' three leading rushers for 1976:

Doug Dennison 542 yards
Robert Newhouse 450 yards
Scott Laidlaw 424 yards

Dorsett didn't enter the game until the start of the second half. By then the Cowboys already had a comfortable 21–0 lead, but the cheer that arose when he jogged onto the field made it clear that the crowd of 59,504 had not yet seen what it had come to see. Landry wasted no time appeasing the multitude. He had Quarterback Danny White run a "Toss 49 Fullback Lead," a maneuver that called for a pitchout to Dorsett going to the right. Number 33 took the ball on the run, and at first it appeared he would be unable to get around the corner. Then he accelerated. He outran the Charger defenders along the line and turned cleanly upfield. Angling defensive backs quickly ran him out of bounds, but Dorsett's spurt had gained eight yards. From the stands came whoops of appreciation. The Dallas Cowboys had an outside running game.

Down on the sidelines Cowboy Personnel Director Gil Brandt watched expressionlessly. The Dallas rookies are his charge. If they are successful, he is successful. If they fail, he fails. In Brandt's 18 years with Dallas, the Cowboys had never touted a college prospect as highly as they had Dorsett. Now, in just one run, his first run, Dorsett had demonstrated why he could be so valuable to the Cowboys, and everyone along the bench seemed excited. Safety Cliff Harris walked up to Brandt and kidded, "Well, you can smile now."

In Dallas' next series Dorsett took a swing pass and sped 15 yards, bringing the crowd to its feet again. Then, on a handoff to the right, he made his full spin, avoiding a befuddled Charger defender, and picked up 11 more yards. A few plays later White hit Drew Pearson with a short pass for a touchdown. With Dorsett in the backfield the Cowboys had moved 50 yards to a touchdown in 10 plays, their first sustained drive of 1977

Now all the Cowboys were smiling. Dorsett sat out the next game, nursing his slight knee injury, played only briefly against Miami, and then started Dallas' fourth game against the Baltimore Colts. Playing less than three quarters, he led all rushers with 99 yards. Even Landry, who has tried to treat Dorsett like "any other rookie," was impressed. "Dorsett had a great game, no question about that," said the coach. "He has great acceleration. If he keeps playing like that, it would be difficult to keep him out of the lineup." In the Cowboys' last two exhibitions Dorsett carried a total of only 17 times, and gained just 43 yards. Still, for his five games he averaged 4.2 yards a carry, and his 187 yards topped all Dallas rushers by almost 50 yards.

Hello, Super Bowl.

"Beat Oakland" is the name of the game as the NFL's 28 teams open the 14-week regular season leading to the playoffs and Super Bowl XII. Turn the page for scouting reports as filed by Robert F. Jones, Joe Marshall, Ron Reid and Daphne Hurford.

AFC East

Last year the **New England Patriots** turned from a 3–11 club into an 11–3 wild-card team and came within a referee's whistle of knocking off Super Bowl winner Oakland in the opening round of the playoffs. So complete, convincing and continuing is the Patriot turnaround that New England now rates as the principal threat to Oakland's hopes for another Super Bowl championship.

The Patriots could hand the ball to Granny Goose, run to the left on every play and go unbeaten in 1977. Guard John Hannah, Tackle Leon Gray and Tight End Russ Francis, all Pro Bowl-ers, make up the best left side in the NFL—if, that is, Hannah and Gray, who walked out on the Patriots before the team's final preseason game, settle their renegotiation disputes with the club—while Fullback Sam (Bam) Cunningham is a crushing blocker. The Patriots are also loaded with good runners. Cunningham is a bruiser who busts tackles. His backup, Don Calhoun, is bucking for a starting job; last year Calhoun replaced the injured Cunningham and put together four straight 100-yard games. Halfback Andy Johnson had knee surgery this week and is lost for the season.

New England's other running threat is Quarterback Steve Grogan, who led all NFL quarterbacks with 397 yards rushing in 1976. "A lot of people keep asking if I'm going to run the ball this year," says the 6′ 4″, 205-pound Grogan. "The answer is yes—if the defense lets me. Hey, I'm as big as most of the running backs."

In theory, the Patriots should never have to pass, and when they do go to the air, they should catch defenses napping. But their passing attack hardly resembles Oakland's bomb squad, and if Grogan is forced to throw, the Patriots' dream season could crumble. His top three receivers last year were Johnson, Cunningham and Francis, in that order. Enough said about New England's deep passing game. Darryl Stingley and rookie Stanley Morgan both can go deep, but Grogan has never shown accuracy at long range.

Typical of the Patriot turnabout is the improvement in their defensive secondary. Two years ago New England was inept against the pass. Now the Patriots are so solid that top draft pick Raymond Clayborn of Texas can't even break into the unit led by two 1976 first-round choices, Rookie-of-the-Year Cornerback Mike Haynes and Safety Tim Fox. Last season Haynes became the first Patriot ever to return a punt for a touchdown—and he did it twice. But now Haynes has turned the kickoff and punt-return duties over to Clayborn and Morgan, both of whom returned punts for touchdowns in an exhibition against Green Bay.

The Patriots again will use a 3–4 alignment up front. The linebacking is exceptional inside with Steve Nelson and Sam Hunt, but the line could be stronger.

Exploiting the Patriot weaknesses will be difficult, for New England has what appears to be the NFL's easiest schedule. The Patriots play only two teams that had winning records last season—Baltimore (twice) and Cleveland (once). Their other rivals had a combined record of 43–111. Even if New England falls on its face in its tough games, it should finish 11–3—and win the division.



JOHNSON (MIDDLE) IS HURT BUT CALHOUN AND CUNNINGHAM DOUBLE-TEAM MITCHELL

"I don't understand why no one's picking us to win," says **Baltimore Colt** Coach Ted Marchibroda. "We've won for two years and people still don't believe we're for real."

It's the Colts' linebacking and secondary that people don't believe in. Tom MacLeod (out all last season after Achilles-tendon surgery) and Stan White are fine outside linebackers, but Marchibroda still is searching for a replacement in the middle for Jim Cheyunski, whose ailing knee forced him to retire. The Colts' Sack Pack front four last season led the AFC with 56 quarterback dumpings, but

as Marchibroda says, "If we didn't get the big play from our front four we didn't get it at all."

To seal his leaky secondary, Marchibroda signed free-agent Cornerback Norm Thompson, formerly of St. Louis Thompson has never shone against the sweep, but he is a good, if gambling, pass defender.

There are few questions about the Colt offense, which led the NFL in scoring last season. Bert Jones, 26, ranks with Kenny Stabler as the game's best quarterbacks. Halfback Lydell Mitchell is versatile and consistent, he has had 60 receptions and 289 carries in each of the last two seasons, and rushed for 1,193 and 1,200 yards behind a solid line led by Tackle George Kunz. Second-year man Ron Lee gives the Colts breakaway speed at fullback, but the main chore for a Baltimore fullback is blocking and protecting Jones, meaning that injury-prone Roosevelt Leaks has the edge. And when Jones takes to the air, speedy Roger Carr usually catches everything thrown his way.

Baltimore will have no trouble scoring, and if the defense holds up, the AFC East race could last until the Colts finish their game against the Patriots at about 7 p.m. on the season's final Sunday.

It still seems hard to believe that **Miami Dolphins**' Coach Don Shula had a losing record in 1976, his first in 15 years of coaching. Injuries have ruined the Dolphins the past two years. They don't just lose players, they lose whole units. Last season four linebackers went down. This year the offensive line looks doomed. Tackle Wayne Moore has recovered from torn triceps but Guard Bob Kuechenberg (two fractured vertebrae) will miss the first few games. In addition, Safety Charlie Babb is sidelined with a separated shoulder.

Compounding Shula's worries, Defensive Linemen Randy Crowder and Don Reese will spend the 1977 season in the Miami stockade as the result of a cocaine bust. And Shula sent Right Tackle Darryl Carlton to Tampa Bay after Carlton, who was in an off-season barroom brawl that led to a fiery car accident, defied him on the practice field.

On defense, the Dolphins will use a 3–4 and two of the three front men will be rookies—first draft choice A. J. Duhe from LSU and second pick Bob Baumhower from Alabama. Behind them will be two 1976 first-round selections, Larry Gordon and Kim Bokamper, along with third-year man Steve Towle and veteran Mike Kolen. Maybe the "New Names" will become known names like the Dolphins' old "No-Name" defense.

On offense, the Dolphins, who once passed to maintain ball control, will now run just enough to keep their air attack from being shot down. Miami's strength is a trio of fleet receivers—Nat Moore, Freddie Solomon and Duriel Harris. Shula is using all three at once—along with a tight end, either Jim Mandich or Andre Tillman—by putting one of the speedsters into the backfield. Quarterback Bob Griese will wear shatterproof spectacles because of blurred vision in his right eye. There is no hiding the fact that only desperation could have forced Shula to abandon his conservative attack.

For the **Buffalo Bills**, the idea will be to have O. J. Simpson run for 500 yards and 10 touchdowns a game because the Bills will require at least that to compensate for their inept defense. Simpson needs only 374 yards to join Jim Brown in the exclusive 10,000-yard club. Fullback Jim Braxton, a smashing blocker, returns from the knee injury that ended his 1976 season after his very first carry. Up front, the "Electric Company" boasts two fine guards, Joe DeLamielleure and Reggie McKenzie, and the Bills have added speed to the tackle spot by replacing Donnie Green (traded to Philadelphia) with second-year man Joe Devlin.

The key to the Bills' offense will be Quarterback Joe Ferguson, who was having an exceptional season last year until four broken transverse processes in his back sidelined him for the final seven games. "My first couple of years with this team, I didn't have any leadership ability at all because I was scared to death," Ferguson admits "All the pressure was on Juice. Now, this season, the pressure will be shared." What Ferguson needs most of all is a receiver to share some of the burden with Bobby Chandler, preferably a speedster who can help open up the defense. John Holland has the speed, but not much else.

The Bills' defense was one of the NFL's worst last season, and there is no new talent to upgrade it. Instead, Buffalo will try to get results through hocus-pocus, using blitzes to harry opponents into errors. The question is: How long will it take rivals to solve the Bills' bag of tricks?

The **New York Jets** are rebuilding. Again. They have, at last, rid themselves of the delusion that Joe Namath could crank one more Super Bowl out of his arm, and they have, finally, put a solid football man—Jim Kensil, formerly Pete Rozelle's right-hand man as the NFL's executive director—in charge of the show.

Understandably, new Coach Walt Michaels will lose with youth. On offense, he has moved Richard Caster, never glue-fingered, out to wide receiver and switched Jerome Barkum to tight end; Caster, however, suffered a broken hand in the last exhibition and will miss about four games. Rookie Flanker Wesley Walker's speed will open defenses, but Walker dropped almost everything in the exhibitions. Another critical problem is that Quarterback Richard Todd has shown no ability to throw deep. Second-year Linebacker Greg Buttle buoys a kid defense that may average 45 minutes per game on the field.

"I think we'll surprise a few people, mostly ourselves, by winning a few games," says Offensive Tackle Marvin Powell, the Jets' No. 1 draft choice. Only a few

continued

AFC Central



ROOKIES EDWARDS AND WHITLEY BEEF UP THE BENGALS' FRONT

This is the meanest, keenest, roughest, toughest division in the league. Anything can happen? Yes, the **Cincinnati Bengals**—after three years of frustration at the hands of the Pittsburgh Steelers—will win the division title. For three reasons: squabbling among the Steelers, a pussycat schedule, and deeper talent than the franchise has ever had.

The only crack team the Bengals face—other than two meetings with Pittsburgh—is Minnesota, and they routed the Vikings in a preseason game. The Steelers, on the other hand, play three toughies—Oakland, Baltimore and Dallas—in addition to the Bengals.

Nominally, this is Bill Johnson's second year as coach of the Bengals, but he was Paul Brown's top assistant from the team's inception in 1968, so he is thoroughly at home, as are most of his aides.

Two excellent first-round draft choices, Eddie Edwards (Miami) and Wilson Whitley (Houston), both defensive tackles, have shored up the Bengals' weak rush line. Edwards is the faster of the two and, thus, the better pass rusher, while Whitley is stronger and his quick lateral moves make him the better tackler. Elsewhere, the defense is sound. The linebackers, led by Jim LeClair, are solid enough so that the Bengals will play much more 3–4 than previously, and the secondary has two Pro Bowl-ers, Tom Casanova and Lemar Parrish. The only loss on defense is Tackle Bob Brown, whose bulk will be missed on goal-line stands but who was never a strong pass rusher or much for pursuit. The two rookies more than compensate for his loss.

On offense, the key player is, of course, Quarterback Ken Anderson, and if he goes down, the Bengals can probably forget about the playoffs. But the offensive line, featuring Center Bob Johnson and Tackle Vern Holland, has matured and cohered into a virtually impermeable unit; so Anderson should not have to worry too much about being sacked. Anderson, who receives each play by messenger from the sidelines, has compiled gaudy offensive statistics throughout his six seasons in Cincinnati, but has always been error-prone in games billed as "crucial." The other linchpin in the Bengal offense is Wide Receiver Isaac Curtis, who not only has sure hands but also can block and run. The Bengals hope to get the ball to Curtis more often this season by setting him on the weak side, rather than as a flanker to the strong side, thus making it more difficult for opponents to double-cover him.

Archie Griffin, who spent last season learning the pro system, now understands why he's doing what he does, and his game has improved immeasurably. Paired with Griffin will be one or another of Cincy's multitalented running backs—big Boobie Clark (245 pounds) or quick Lenvil Elliott; Griffin's Ohio State teammate, Fullback Pete Johnson, the leading scorer in Big 10 history (58 TDs) is an exceptional blocker and rarely fumbles. The only soft spot on offense is at tight end, where injury-prone Bob Trumpy is backed by a pair of rookies.

Although Pittsburgh has beaten the Bengals in five of six meetings the past three seasons, if Cincinnati gets a split this year it will gain the playoffs as Central Division champs.

It's hard to believe, but old age and That Ole Debbil Doubt are catching up with the **Pittsburgh Steelers**. Center Ray Mansfield and Linebacker Andy Russell have retired, after 14 and 13 years, respectively. Cornerback Mel Blount and Middle Linebacker Jack Lambert were teed off at Coach Chuck Noll and the Rooney family, and missed all (Blount) or most (Lambert) of the preseason. It's not that two such talented men really need a full camp to play well, but the worm of discontent has a way of infecting a whole squad in very short order. The fine tuning that Noll achieved over eight seasons could go off frequency in a hurry.

Anticipating Russell's retirement, Noll used his No. 1 draft pick for a replacement, and came up with Robin Cole, a 220-pounder from New Mexico. Like Lambert and Jack Ham, he has cornerback speed and is a hard, almost savage hitter. Another rookie, Dennis (Dirt) Winston from Arkansas, adds depth at linebacker in the event of injuries.

The secondary is where the Steelers may be hurting. With Blount playing surly and the other defenders looking weak, not just in preseason but also in the playoff game against Oakland, the worries that Pittsburgh may be vulnerable to long passes seem valid. The defensive line, on the other hand, is as tough as ever with Mean Joe, L. C. Greenwood and friends. The veteran starters have been bolstered by the maturation of two "new boys," John Banaszak and Steve Furness, who earned their spurs during the injury-plagued 1976 season.

On offense, the Steelers have an eminently interchangeable lot of guards, tackles, centers and tight ends. All are ver-

satile. Mike Webster and Jim Clack can play either center or guard, and often do. Gerry Mullins, nominally a guard, plays tackle and tight end as well. Larry Brown, the 245-pound tight end, moved in at tackle at times last year, and this year he's there permanently. His old position is now filled by 260-pound Bennie Cunningham, whose very bulk provides a screen for passes thrown his way. Quarterback and running back are sound, with Terry Bradshaw, Franco Harris and Rocky Bleier starting, and Mike Kruczek, Reggie Harrison and Jack Deloplaine backing up. The most impressive rookie is Laverne Smith of Kansas, who broke all of Gale Sayers' and John Riggins' Jayhawk rushing records. Lynn Swann leads a deep wide-receiver corps.

For all that, though, the parlay of a rising Cincinnati star, a tougher schedule than the Bengals' and the erosion of internal harmony will combine to keep Pittsburgh out of the Super Bowl.

The **Cleveland Browns** made a remarkable turnaround last season, ending up with a 9–5 record after going 3–11 the previous year. Forrest Gregg won AFC Coach of the Year honors from the AP for the feat. Yet the achievement was dubious because last year Cleveland had a soft schedule—teams like Atlanta, Philadelphia, Tampa Bay, the New York Jets and, in its own division, Houston twice.

This year Cleveland must face reality. The first four games are against the Bengals (who have whupped them four times running), New England, the Steelers and world-champion Oakland, and Defensive Tackle Jerry Sherk, who may be the best in the NFL, will miss all four because of a knee injury. Later come the Bengals and the Steelers again and Los Angeles. With luck, the Browns will go 7–7.

That's not to say, however, that Gregg has made no improvements. He was smart to recognize the talent of Brian Sipe at quarterback, though he had little choice after starter Mike Phipps was hurt in last season's opener. Phipps has been traded to Chicago, giving Sipe a free rein. He has talented targets in Paul Warfield (who says he is playing the last of a sterling 14 seasons), Reggie Rucker and Tight End Oscar Roan.

Running Back Greg Pruitt, the mighty mite from Oklahoma, got his second 1,000-yard season in a row last year and is one of the most exciting runners in the NFL. But Pruitt is injury-prone and there's not much behind him.

On defense, the Browns' line will be woeful until Sherk returns, while their linebacking is merely adequate and the secondary has yet to distinguish itself. Moreover, Cleveland also got no help from the draft, in contrast to division rivals Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. The Browns' special teams are inadequate, too, the punting being particularly lackluster. Put it all together and it adds up to third place.

Since 1970, the **Houston Oilers** have hired and fired four head coaches, four general managers, six personnel directors, 11 scouts, 23 assistant coaches, three publicity directors, three team photographers, three trainers and two ticket managers. During that period, they have had exactly one winning season. Unfortunately, this year promises much more of the former.

Houston has no offense. Last year, only the Seattle Seahawks had a weaker running game. After a hope-inspiring 10–4 season in 1975, the Oilers crashed to 5–9 in 1976, and Head Coach Bum Phillips knows that this year he must win or walk. He'll probably walk.

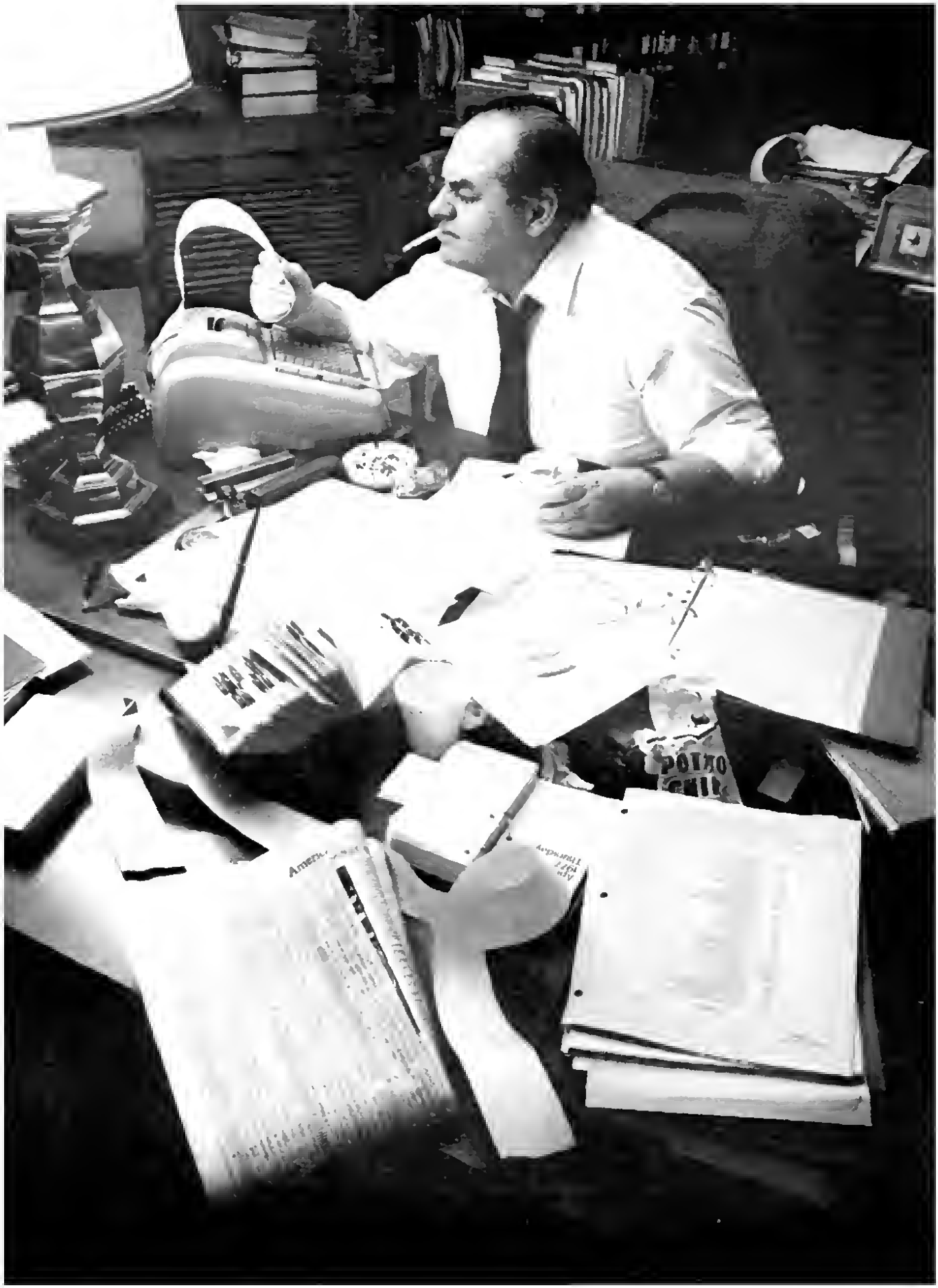
Recognizing the need for points and yardage, Houston used 10 of its 14 draft choices to pick offensive players, but only four have become starters, including top drafts Morris Towns and George Reihner on the offensive line. At the end of last season, 23 of the team's 43-man roster had been signed as free agents.

Quarterback Dan Pastorini, who vows that this will be his last season as an Oiler, will rely mainly on desperate bombs to Wide Receiver Ken Burrough and short, inconsequential passes to halfbacks behind a screen. In years past, Pastorini would scrap a play if it didn't work the first time out, which usually was the case, but now he seems a bit more dedicated. What would really help the Houston attack is a good season from punt-and-kickoff return specialist Billy (White Shoes) Johnson, who played spectacularly in 1975 but miserably in 1976. On defense, the Oilers are still all Curley Culp and Elvin Bethea on the line and Bob Brazile in back of it. Culp, too, wants out. At this rate, there'll be no one left in Houston next season.

continued

ROOKIE LINEBACKER COLE IS A KEY TO THE STEELERS' DEFENSE





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ALL OF US HELPING EACH OF US.

AFC West

Newness prevails in this division. A new quarterback works for a new head coach in Denver, another new signal-caller finally calls his own plays in San Diego and rookies try to flesh out the offense in Kansas City and the defense at Seattle, a new division entry. But the race will be the same old story: the **Oakland Raiders** will romp to the title for the sixth year in succession, and unless Kenny Stabler forgets how to throw spirals, or Freddie Biletnikoff forgets how to catch them, the Raiders should be in New Orleans next January to defend their Super Bowl championship.

Oakland has its familiar arsenal of superb weapons—Stabler's bomb-and-batter offense, an intimidating defense featuring Jack Tatum, George Atkinson and Phil Villapiano, and skilled special teams. Still another Raider strength is Coach John Madden, who says he will not tolerate that trademark of champions—complacency. In his eight seasons, Madden has wrenched quality performances from his players as consistently as he has motivated some of the NFL's most celebrated head cases. His genius, however, has gone largely unnoticed, flamboyant owner Al Davis getting most of the ink. Madden's considerable bulk, his redheaded rages at game officials and a sideline wardrobe best deseribed as the hamper look have overshadowed his scholarly approach to the game and his stunning accomplishments. In point of fact, the Raiders have won almost three-fourths of all the games they have played under Madden, and his NFL career record (91–28–7) makes him a cinch to become the first NFL coach to win 100 games in fewer than 10 seasons.



VILLAPIANO AND TATUM HUNT HEADS FOR THE SUPER CHAMPS

On the field, no Raider epitomizes Madden's "Don't worry about it" philosophy more than Stabler, the team leader, who handles pressure as if his heart pumps Freon instead of blood. The NFL passing champion, Stabler throws so accurately (66.7%) that fans have forgotten he is a lefty.

Stabler's passing will again be the Raiders' most devastating weapon. Sprinter Cliff Branch, the NFL leader in touchdown receptions last season with 12, specializes in the long ball, and Tight End Dave Casper, another All-Pro, works the medium-range stuff along with Biletnikoff, the Super Bowl MVP who gets open for vital third-down catches when everyone in the ball park knows that Stabler will be throwing his way. Among them, Branch, Casper and Biletnikoff caught 142 passes for 29 touchdowns last year. Incidentally, the Raiders have no Tarkenton-style short-pass diagrams in their playbook.

Short on guile and long on power, Oakland's rushing attack is less dramatic. However, Mark van Eeghen rushed for 1,012 yards last season, and Clarence Davis ravaged the Vikings for 137 yards in the Super Bowl, so rivals can't concentrate on pass defense. Stabler's usual attack point on the ground is behind the left-side blocking of Guard Gene Upshaw and Tackle Art Shell, names that the Vikings won't soon forget.

The biggest adjustment of the Raiders' Super season came after their fourth exhibition game when a calamitous series of defensive-line injuries dictated full-time use of the 3–4 Orange defense rather than the standard 4–3. For reasons dealing with the mastering of new techniques, the Orange was green in the early going and statistically unimpressive at season's end, but why argue with a 16–1 record? This year the 3–4 has been in effect from the start, and with John Matuszak and Dave Rowe settled in up front with Otis Sistrunk, the execution will be improved.

Also punishing. The fines and the flap that followed the George Atkinson-Lynn Swann incident didn't diminish the ferocity of Raider tackling. Free Safety Tatum is one of the most aggressive hitters in the NFL, as is Linebacker Villapiano, who says, "When you play for Oakland, you play to win and you play tough. It's not something the coaches teach or talk about. It's just there. It's an attitude: you are going to hit people and you are going to smash them if you are an Oakland Raider."

This philosophy will cost the Raiders the customary chunks of penalty yardage; indeed, Oakland's main weakness may well prove to be its penchant for penalties.

Displaced by Roger Staubach in Dallas and disgraced by shoddy support in New York, Craig Morton now toils as the 26th **Denver Bronco** quarterback in 18 seasons, and may well be the surprise player of 1977.

If so, it will surprise the rest of the nation more than it will rock the Rockies. After all, Morton's 13-year career has hardly been spectacular, and Denver, a franchise that has had but three winning seasons, reacts to success in pe-

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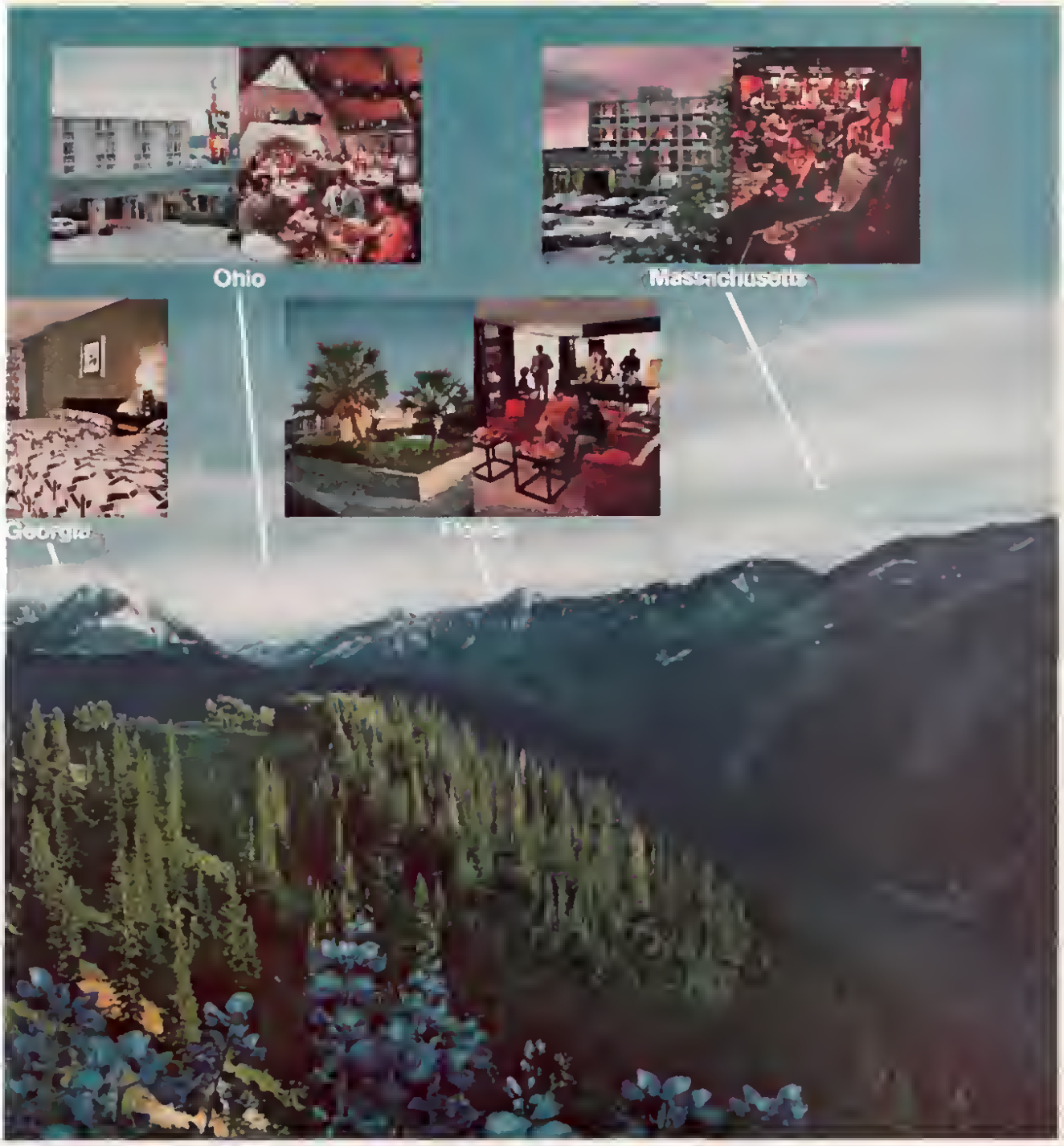


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culiar fashion Last year the Broncos followed up the finest season in their history (9–5) with an open player rebellion that cost John Ralston his jobs as head coach and general manager. As good as their record was, the Broncos again fell short of the playoffs—and Ralston, as part of his hard-sell positive thinking, had guaranteed that the Broncos would make them. Enter Red Miller, who as New England's offensive coordinator last season greased Ralston's skids with a game plan that hammered the Broncs for 38 points and killed their wild-card hopes.

Miller's biggest job will be the toughening of an offensive line that yielded 48 sacks. Guard Steve Schindler, the No. 1 draft choice, reminds Miller of the Patriots' John Hannah when Hannah was a rookie, and second-year man Tom Glassic has settled in at the other guard, but the line is far from playoff caliber. Morton, a pocket passer with no scrambling ability, is ineffective without good protection, as was proved in New York.

Otis Armstrong, fresh from his second 1,000-yard season, leads Denver's running attack, and he will get help from Rob Lytle, the promising rookie from Michigan. But ball control has never been a Bronco strength. "What I want to develop here," Miller says, "is the idea we can control the football when we have to. I desperately want that, and I guarantee we'll have it."

If they do, the Broncos' solid defense should be even better. It already has been improved by the return of End Lyle Alzado, the tough pass rusher who sat out last season with injuries, and by the acquisition of Free Safety Bernard Jackson from Cincinnati. Denver's other strong points include Placekicker Jim Turner, who ranks fifth in NFL career scoring, and Rick Upchurch, who tied an NFL record by returning four punts for touchdowns last season

As always, Denver is short on quality backup personnel, and if Morton is not the solution to the quarterback problem that has haunted the Broncos since their inception, it could be a Rocky Mountain low once again.

The **San Diego Chargers** may well be at once the most spectacular and the most puzzling team in the NFL. On the one hand, the Chargers have the potential for a dynamic, big-play offense. On the other, there is considerable doubt that Coach Tommy Prothro can inspire his team beyond mediocrity. "Prothro couldn't motivate Dale Carnegie," one Charger assistant whispered last season. Maybe not, but to Prothro's credit, he has brought decency, dignity and many fine athletes to a franchise once woefully short in all three categories

Chief among Prothro's new acquisitions are Quarterback James Harris and receiver/return specialist Johnny Rodgers, a 1973 No. 1 draft choice who joins the club after four years in Canada. Harris, who will operate behind a strong young line bolstered by top draft choice Bob Rush at center, has boosted team morale and seems the answer to the leadership vacuum created by the departure of Dan Fouts,



HIS KNEE MENDED, ALZADO IS BACK TO GIVE DENVER A PASS RUSH

his temporarily retired predecessor. Rodgers works with dependable Charlie Joiner at wide receiver and teams on punt returns with 1976 No. 1 pick Joe Washington, who missed all last season after knee surgery. Defensively, the Chargers will simply hope that they can keep the opposition in the 20s each game.

The Chargers should be fun to watch this season, but if Prothro fails to inspire them, another so-so record will cost him his vantage point on the sidelines.

The **Kansas City Chiefs** and the **Seattle Seahawks** will stage a dogfight to escape the division cellar. The Chiefs have the most brutal schedule in the NFL, and the draft did little to improve their gravest weakness, a defense that ranked 27th—next to last—and yielded an average of 204.4 yards rushing per game. Offensively, Mike Livingston is a productive, if not Stablerian, quarterback and Tony Reed, a rookie running back from Colorado, should make Chief fans forget that Woody Green is out for the year with a knee injury.

Seattle moves into the NFL's tougher conference and will pay dearly for having the NFL's worst defense. Jack Patera needs instant maturity from a host of youngsters if he expects to match last season's two victories—two more than expansion-brother Tampa Bay—but the Seahawks' passing attack, directed by left-handed Quarterback Jim Zorn, should give the Kingdome some cheerful moments. Of course, the fans in Seattle would really have had something to cheer about if Tony Dorsett had been willing to play for the Seahawks

CONTINUED

NFC East

The measure of the **Dallas Cowboys**' organizational superiority is that they seem to get better when they should get worse. This year Dallas must do without Lee Roy Jordan, who retired after 14 years at middle linebacker, and the right side of last season's offensive line. Guard Blaine Nye has decided to stay near Stanford and pursue a Ph.D., while Tackle Rayfield Wright had knee surgery and won't be ready until at least midseason. Nye and Wright were All-Pro. So how crippled does this leave the Cowboys? Well, Dallas should win the NFC East more easily than ever.

They will win because of their 1975 draft and because Tony Dorsett arrives as an instant TD threat. Burton Lawless and Herbert Scott, 1975 selections, acted as messenger guards last year, splitting time on the left side. Lawless now moves over to Nye's slot while Scott becomes the regular left guard. Scott is the better pass blocker, Lawless—as Dorsett will discover—the better blocker on running plays. The Cowboys' fourth-round pick in 1975, Pat Donovan, is their fastest lineman and inherits Wright's job. Bob Breunig, No. 3 in 1975, started at strongside linebacker last year and now fills Jordan's position. Two other linebackers from the 1975 draft, Thomas Henderson and Mike Hegman, work the strong side, while Randy White, the No. 1 pick overall in 1975, has shifted from linebacker to defensive tackle, and will start alongside veteran Jethro Pugh.

Most of the excitement in Dallas surrounds Dorsett (*page 38*). "He's the first player we've had since Bob Hayes who can open a defense up," says Coach Tom Landry. "Hayes dictated what a defense did." The Cowboys have not had an outside running threat in the '70s, and rivals have taken advantage of this shortcoming. "Teams defense you according to your strengths," says Quarterback Roger Staubach. "Last year no one was concerned with our running."

Actually, the Cowboys won't have to score a whole lot of points to win games because their defense seems impenetrable. Aside from the crew obtained in the 1975 draft, Defensive End Ed (Too Tall) Jones is finally becoming a real live terror, Harvey Martin has developed into the NFC's fiercest quarterback attacker, and Dallas has the best pair of safeties in the league in Charlie Waters and Cliff Harris.

Out of charity, the Cowboys generally lose a couple, usually to an Atlanta and a San Diego, but in December they will be in the playoffs for the 11th time in 12 years.

Inexplicably, the **St. Louis Cardinals** have done nothing to improve their lackluster defense. Instead, they seem to have made a bad situation even worse. Not only did the Cardinals permit two starters who had played out their options—Middle Linebacker Greg Hartle and Cornerback Norm Thompson—to get away, but they also used their first two draft picks to select offensive players. And the last thing St. Louis needs is more offensive players.

Maybe the Cardinals can justify the losses of Hartle, who had knee surgery, and Thompson, who had a case of the blahs on running plays, but the decisions to draft Quarterback Steve Pisarkiewicz and Running Back George Franklin defy logic. True, St. Louis will someday have to replace Jim Hart at quarterback, and Franklin, a 225-pound, 9.4 sprinter who tore up his knee in the last exhibition game, has potential, but what St. Louis really needed was some players to relieve the pressure the Cardinals' point-a-minute defense has always placed on Hart's offense. Again, the defensive line is a big question mark. One end, Ron Yankowski, missed most of 1976 with a fractured arm, and the other, John Zook, played with a badly bruised thigh. Tackle Mike Dawson had an exceptional rookie year but needs help. Roger Wehrli and Ken Reaves are solid deep men, but there are all kinds of problems at linebacker now that Hartle has departed and 14-year mainstay Larry Stallings has retired.

It's really too bad for Hart that he can't play against the St. Louis defense. The Cardinal offensive line—particularly Pro Bowl-ers Tom Banks at center, Conrad Dobler at right guard and Dan Dierdorf at right tackle—gives Hart the finest protection in the league. Hart also has one of the NFL's best deep threats in Mel Gray, not to mention triple-threat Halfback Terry Metcalf, although Metcalf had an off year in 1976, which he blames on contract worries. The Cardinals have torn up Metcalf's old contract and given him a new one-year deal that will make him a free agent at the end of the season. "I think this thing will benefit me a lot," Metcalf says. "Now I can play with a free mind."

George Allen's **Washington Redskins** also failed to get needed defensive help in the off-season. Allen did pick up free agent Hartle, but then lost him to a recurrent knee injury in training camp. He doesn't have another draft pick until the Tricentennial.

Most important, the Redskins lack a pass rush. What sacks they get these days result mostly from blitzes, a hocus-pocus tactic that purist Allen knows makes him far too vulnerable in the secondary. With Chris Hanburger, 36, recovering from an appendectomy, the linebacking is a weakness, but the defensive backs, headed by Ken Houston, are as good as the Cowboys'. Despite little help from the troops up front last year, the Redskin secondary permitted opponents to complete only 41% of their passes, an NFL low.

On offense, Washington should be vastly improved because of one man, Wide Receiver Charley Taylor. Taylor, the leading receiver in NFL history with 635 catches, missed all of 1976 with a shoulder injury. He should take some of the double coverage off Frank Grant, and also give Billy Kilmer a dependable target for his favored sideline patterns. More important, Taylor should give a boost to the Redskin ground game with his ferocious blocking. Last season Mike Thomas somehow rushed for 1,101 yards, but John Riggins, a 1,044-yard man for the Jets the year before, had a long gain of just 15 yards and ran for only 572 overall.

A lot of the old Redskins are talking about a last push, but they aren't likely to catch St. Louis for a wild-card spot.

Philadelphia Eagle Placekicker Horst Muhlmann reported to camp in the greatest shape of his life. That takes care of the Eagles' offense. In the City of Brotherly

Love, there is precious little else to be thankful for.

The Eagles don't have a first-round draft pick until 1979. And as if it weren't bad enough that they have no way to get a decent young player, they are now also inventing ways to throw away the ones they have. Quarterback Mike Boryla wanted out of Philadelphia, and the team, which assumed that he might be good trade bait, was willing to oblige him. But then the Eagles forgot to send Boryla his mandatory option letter by the stipulated date of May 1, 1977. So he became a free agent, made a deal for himself with Tampa Bay—and the Eagles got only an undisclosed draft choice in return.

Philadelphia did acquire Los Angeles Quarterback Ron Jaworski, the Polish Rifle, in a trade for the rights to Tight End Charle Young, but Jaworski has always been erratic. Luckily for Jaworski, Eagle passers can afford to be slightly erratic when passing to premier Receiver Harold Carmichael because at 6′ 8″ Carmichael is able to haul down a lot of overthrows.

On defense, Coach Dick Vermeil will try a 3–4, relying heavily on veterans Manny Sistrunk and Art Thoms, the former Raider. The Eagles' strength is at linebacker, where middle man Bill Bergey plays several positions at once. Bergey spent a rigorous off-season, including two weeks deep in the Ozarks, "where I ran and growled and acted mean." Bergey also dropped 15 pounds, slimming to 237, and relinquished his role as the team's No. 1 beer drinker by swearing off the suds. "He is playing the best football of his life," marvels Vermeil.

John McVay took over the **New York-New Jersey Giants** when they were 0–7 at midseason and narrowly won himself a two-year contract by leading them to three wins in their last seven games. If McVay doesn't win this year—and he can't—he probably won't get to coach the second year of that contract. He will be fired by Andy Robustelli, who has been director of operations for the Giants for three seasons now and has never had a winner. In the Robustelli regime, the Giants are 10–32–0.

McVay has brought a cheerleader approach to his job, a welcome change from the businesslike atmosphere of Bill Arnsparger. In McVay's seven games his defense gave up an average of just 12 points. That defense, led by Linebacker Brad Van Pelt, is young and has added USC Defensive Tackle Gary Jeter from the draft. It should improve. Whether it can hold opponents below the meager point production of the Giant offense is another matter. Larry Csonka, recovered from knee surgery, doesn't plow up middles the way he used to, and the main quarterback hopes are Jerry Golsteyn, who has never played a game in the NFL—or in any other pro league—and Joe Pisarcik, a refugee from Canada. Csonka and the Giants will get zonked a lot.

CONTINUED

AS CARDINALS BANKS AND DIERDORF WELL KNOW, COWBOYS HARRIS AND WATERS CAN GET INTO THE OPPOSITION'S HAIR



NFC Central



FOREMAN HOPES TO CARRY THE BALL 30 TIMES A GAME

Barring a miracle, the world will be spared the sight of the **Minnesota Vikings** losing their fifth Super Bowl game next January in New Orleans. For eight of the last nine years, the Vikings have won the old black-and-blue division almost by default, but now the feisty Chicago Bears show a striking resemblance to the Monsters of the Midway of yore and, as a result, the Vikings may not have to do their Christmas shopping between playoff practices in Tulsa. In addition to two games with the Bears, Minnesota plays Oakland, Los Angeles, Dallas, St. Louis and Cincinnati this season. Moreover, the major asset of recent Viking teams—experience—should now be reclassified as a liability called old age. Nine of Coach Bud Grant's starters are at least 32 years old, and they acted about twice their age in Minnesota's most recent Super Bowl debacle.

However, there are two pieces of good news for the people in the land of the frozen tailgate. First, Francis A. Tarkenton has consented to interrupt his careers as a television commentator and a computer conglomerate to perform at quarterback for his 17th season. With newly arrived Wide Receivers Sammy White and Ahmad Rashad in the lineup, Tarkenton rediscovered the home-run ball last year; White, the NFC's best rookie, and Rashad each caught more than 50 passes, and White had 10 touchdown receptions.

In addition, Chuck Foreman, the normally disgruntled running back and short-pass catcher, claims he is happier now than ever. The reason for Foreman's euphoria is that the Vikings rewrote his contract after he announced he would never play for them again. "It's like lifting a two-ton weight off my head," says Foreman, who last season rushed for 1,155 yards, caught 55 passes for 567 more and scored 14 touchdowns. "I want to gain 2,000 yards," he says. "Tell Fran Tarkenton to give me the ball 30 times a game and I'll do it. I think I'm the best all-round back in football."

That takes care of the Minnesota attack. Now who's going to take care of the defense? For years Grant has been saying, "Our defense bent but it didn't break." In the Super Bowl the Raiders not only broke the Viking defenders, they folded, spindled and mutilated them. Linemen Jim Marshall, Carl Eller and Alan Page are past their prime, as are Linebacker Wally Hilgenberg and Safety Paul Krause. Grant imported Safety Bill Bradley from Philadelphia, but he didn't work out, so Grant can only hope that such prospects as Linemen Mark Mullaney and James White and Linebackers Matt Blair and Fred McNeill play up to their potential. What the Vikings really need is more Nates; the two they've got, Allen and Wright, combined for 10 interceptions and headed the unit that blocked 16 kicks last season.

"If there has been a major accomplishment," says Grant, "it has been meeting the challenge of putting a team on the field each year that is competitive and contending." Grant may find the contending part a bit difficult this season.

Walter Payton led all NFC rushers last year with a **Chicago Bear** - record 1,390 yards. He has had nine 100-yard-plus games in his two pro seasons, he owns or shares five club records, and he already is the team's ninth-leading career ground-gainer. And his nickname is Sweetness. But all was not sweetness for the 7–7 Bears last year as they discovered that the one-man offense went out with the dropkick and the center sneak. Now the Bears will join the rest of the NFL and use a quarterback.

Chicago wooed innovative tactician Sid Gillman from semiretirement in La Jolla, Calif. and installed him as offensive coordinator. The Bears also surrendered a pair of draft choices, including their No. 1 pick next year, to Cleveland in exchange for Quarterback Mike Phipps, who was touted as "another Griese" when he left Purdue seven years ago but has never lived up to those lofty expectations. Phipps' competition is Bob Avellini, a scatter arm who completed only 43.5% of his passes last season and had the second-worst passing rating in the NFC. Gillman has altered the Bears' stodgy formations, revised blocking techniques and made receivers run deeper patterns. And he plans to have Payton catch more than the 15 passes he grabbed last year. But while all this may sound terrific, the real question is whether Phipps and/or Avellini can make it all work.

On defense, the Bears have no such problems. Coach Jack Pardee plans to maximize the talents of Wally Chambers by using him as a "specialist," playing him at different line positions according to down, distance and the opponent's personnel. It was felt that the moody Chambers needed some extra incentive—"He should work harder, but he's an *All*-Pro as it is, so what are you going to tell him?" says one Chicago assistant—so the club ripped up the option clause in his contract and now Chambers will be a free agent at the end of the season, with Chicago retaining the right to match the highest bid. "The gamble was for both of us," says Chambers. "I plan on this being one of my best—if not my best—years. I am confident in Wally Chambers."

The Bears need help at linebacker—Ross Brupbacher has retired to his law office and Doug Buffone is trying to return from an Achilles-tendon operation—but Chicago is improving and could well unseat the Vikings.

"I want an attacking team. I'd rather go down with my guns blazing. We're going to have to make a couple of key trades. We've got to have some big-play players. And as long as I own the team and get the rap for losing, we might as well lose my way." Thus spoke **Detroit Lion** owner Bill Ford last year at the end of his club's dismal 6–8 season. So the Lions paid dearly to acquire Kenny Stabler and Chuck Foreman—right? Wrong! As usual, they did nothing. Oh, they tried to hire Chuck Knox away from the Rams as head coach and general manager, but they even botched that. The new coach is the same man who led the Lions in the last 10 games of the 1976 season, Tommy Hudspeth.

Luckily for Hudspeth, he has a three-year contract. Unluckily, the Lions' offensive line—the unit that permitted Quarterbacks Greg Landry and Joe Reed to be sacked a whopping 67 times a year ago—is still not very good, and Fullback Lawrence Gaines had a second knee operation during training camp and was out for the preseason. Marv Hubbard, who missed the 1976 season after shoulder surgery, has been acquired from Oakland—but when was the last time Al Davis gave away a capable player? On defense, Herb Orvis is the only Lion lineman of renown, so Bill Ford will again have to take the rap for losing.

PAYTON THE RUNNER WILL ALSO BE PAYTON THE PASS CATCHER



Bart Starr maintains that 1977 launches "Phase Three," his third season as coach of the **Green Bay Packers** and the year he hopes his rebuilding program will "turn the corner artistically." If that happens, Starr can thank his lucky stars for Chester Marcol. But a team needs more than a superior placekicker to turn a corner in any fashion, much less artistically, and the Packers are short in all other areas.

On defense, the Packers are peppered with ifs. *If* rookie Defensive End Mike Butler lives up to expectations, *if* Middle Linebacker Jim Carter is fully recovered from his broken arm and other injuries, and *if* Mike C. McCoy can develop at right cornerback, then there is a chance that Green Bay will not give up points in geometric progression. On offense, Guards Gale Gillingham and Bruce Van Dyke have retired, leaving gaping holes in a line that already resembled cheesecloth. And the line is the least of Starr's problems. The running game, once so promising with John Brockington, is unimpressive, and Quarterback Lynn Dickey has never played up to his college press clippings. Wait till Phase Four, Bart.

What can you say about a team that lost its No. 1 and No. 2 quarterbacks (Mike Boryla and Gary Huff) with exhibition-season injuries and may have to open the season with an eighth-round draft choice from Minot State (N. Dak.)—someone named Randy Hedberg—calling signals? A team with a running back (Anthony Davis) who may be the only player ever to be a rookie three times—in the WFL, the CFL and now the NFL? A team whose roster includes the son of the coach (J. K. McKay), two starters who are brothers (Lee Roy and Dewey Selmon), and a free-agent linebacker from Miami (Cecil Johnson) who selected the Bucs over three other clubs bidding for him because "If I didn't make it, I wouldn't have a long, sad ride home"? What can you say about a team that set an NFL record by going 0–14 in its first season and had 17 players on injured reserve? Unfortunately, you can't say much, and Coach John McKay doesn't even try. Asked to assess his **Tampa Bay Buccaneers**, McKay pulled out a cartoon that showed a coach explaining his lineup to a reporter while his players fumble and bumble in the background. The caption read, "I think we should start with our strongest weakness."

The Bucs' strongest weakness has to be youth. Their average age is 24. The defensive line has a total of 11 years of pro experience. The second-strongest weakness is at running back, although Davis and NFL No. 1 draft pick Ricky Bell, both of whom starred under McKay at USC, will find the NFL tougher going than the Pac 8. Once again, the best thing about the Bucs will be McKay's one-liners.

CONTINUED

NFC West

For the fifth straight year the **Los Angeles Rams** are a sure bet to win the division—but, once more, not so sure a bet to be in the Super Bowl. Indeed, judging from their 1–5 exhibition campaign, it seems that none of the shortcomings that left them one step short of the Super Bowl last season—vacillation as to who should be quarterback, three blocked punts in the playoffs, one blocked field-goal attempt—have been remedied. The receiver corps, headed by Harold Jackson and Ron Jessie, has been bolstered with the addition of Charle Young (no typo: that's the way the ex-Philadelphia Eagle tight end now prefers his first name to be spelled), and the defensive backfield—featuring ball hawks Rod Perry and Monte Jackson, who combined for 18 interceptions in 1976—is airtight. Though the defensive platoon lost Tackle Merlin Olsen to retirement and Middle Linebacker Jack (Hacksaw) Reynolds after a contract hassle, the replacements—Cody Jones for Olsen, Jim Youngblood for Reynolds—are accomplished.

But Coach Chuck Knox and owner Carroll Rosenbloom did not settle the James Harris-Ron Jaworski-Pat Haden quarterback mess last season until it was much too late, and now they can't seem to decide between Haden and Joe Namath as their starter. "Bad Knees" Joe was no miracle worker during the exhibitions. The 49ers poured through the Rams' offensive line—a unit, incidentally, that tends to crumble under stress—and sacked Namath five times in one game, and Joe occasionally turned the wrong way—"the Jets' way," he lamely explained—on routine hand-offs to Lawrence McCutcheon and John Cappelletti, the best of the Rams' army of runners. In another game, a 21–0 loss to Oakland, Namath was so ineffective that he was booed repeatedly by the Coliseum crowd in L.A.

Knox' teams always have suffered from kicking lapses at the most inopportune times. In last season's 24–13 loss to the Vikings in the NFC title game, the Rams fell behind 10–0 when the Vikings (1) blocked Tom Dempsey's chip-shot field-goal attempt and returned it 90 yards for a touchdown and (2) blocked Rusty Jackson's punt to set up a field goal for Fred Cox. When the Rams rallied, Dempsey missed the extra-point conversion that would have brought them to within a field goal of the Vikings.

In an attempt to correct these deficiencies, Knox imported old Bootin' Ben Agajanian to training camp and had him shake down the L.A. kicking game. Agajanian examined everything, and when he was finished, both Dempsey and Jackson had lost their jobs, with rookie Glen Walker of USC a likely replacement for both. One minor adjustment Agajanian ordered for the Rams' placekicking shows his attention to detail: during the last three decades the average height of defensive linemen has jumped from 6′ to 6′ 5″, so Agajanian lengthened the Rams' standard snap distance on field-goal and extra-point attempts from seven yards to seven yards and a foot. "You'd be surprised what a difference a foot makes," he says.

For the Rams, that foot—along with some consistent quarterbacking—could mark the distance between the NFC title game and the Super Bowl.

"Not a good team" is the best one can say for the **San Francisco 49ers**. In a weak division, though, the 49ers should be good enough for second place. The sack-happy defensive front four of Cedrick Hardman, Tommy Hart, Cleveland Elam and Jimmy Webb is the best in NFC. Running Backs Delvin Williams and Wilbur Jackson, though scarcely household words, are among the best in the league, having combined for 1,995 yards in 1976. But the 49ers are old and soft in the secondary, have a questionable passing game and are miserable at field-goal kicking. On top of that, San Francisco has a crusher of a schedule—starting with Pittsburgh and including Miami, Minnesota and Dallas, along with the usual double whammy of L.A. Also, two of the 49ers' last three games will be played in the Upper Midwestern cold, which San Francisco teams always hate.

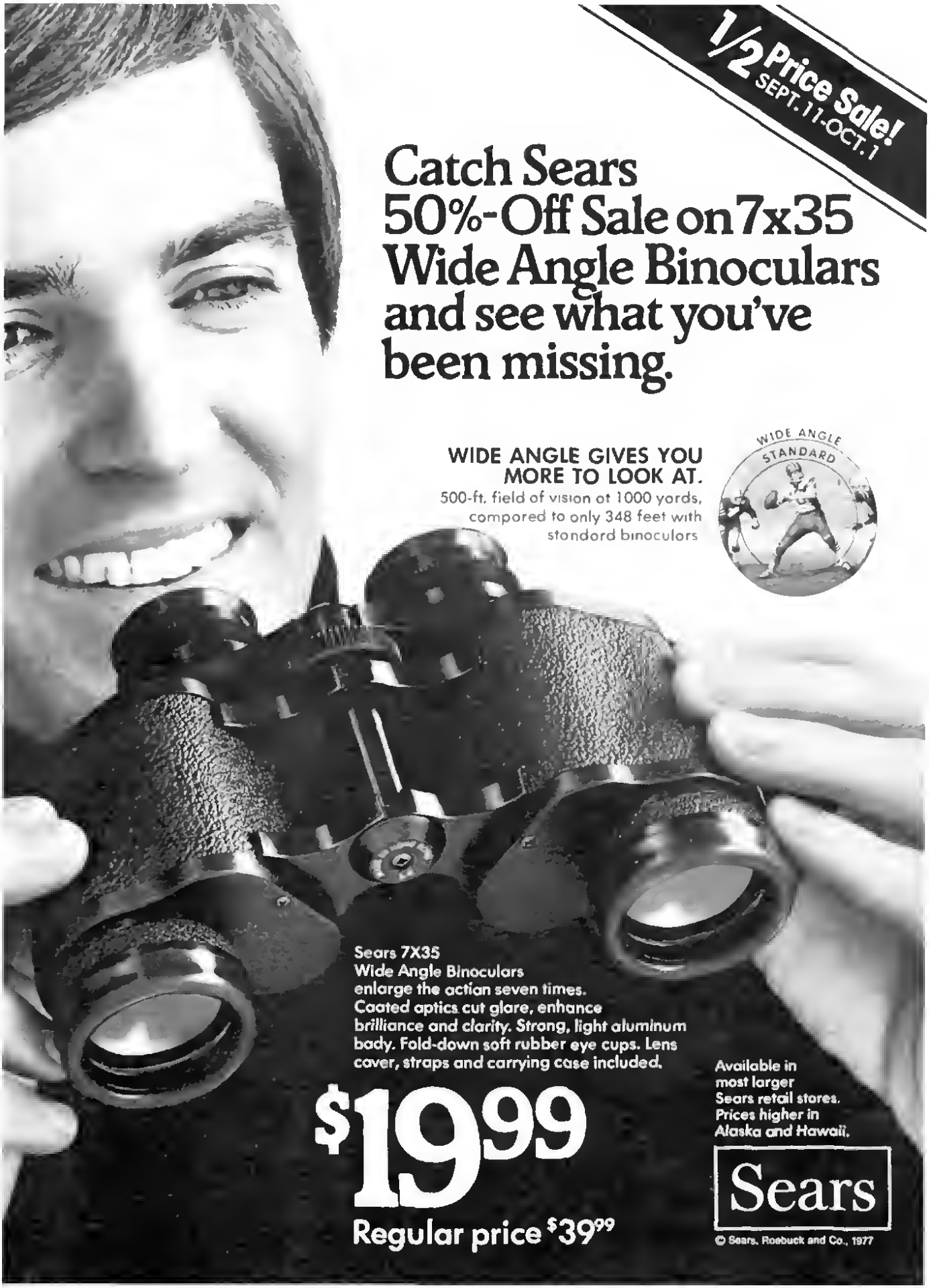
The major imponderable on offense is Quarterback Jim Plunkett. Starting last year with verve after his trade from New England, Plunkett waned to inconsistency and then downright erraticism as the season stretched on. He was inconsistent throughout the exhibition games, too.

The 49ers have new leadership at the top, from owner Ed DeBartolo Jr. (son of a construction and shopping-mall magnate), Head Coach Ken Meyer (the man who helped build Chuck Knox' offense at L.A.) and, perhaps most important,

continued



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General Manager Joe Thomas, who created expansion successes at Minnesota and Miami, then turned the Baltimore Colts around the past two years. Thomas believes in building through the draft but is also a master at picking up worthwhile culls from the preseason debris. He has his work cut out for him in San Francisco.

The one team in the division that could provide a surprise is the **New Orleans Saints**. With Archie Manning back and a schedule as kind as San Francisco's is brutal, Hank Stram's Saints actually have visions, probably unrealistic, of a second-place finish. In their 10 NFL years the Saints have yet to play .500 ball, and last year—Stram's first at the helm—wound up 4–10. No other team has equaled the New Orleans ineptitude during the past decade, and the Saints are the only club (except for expansion babies Tampa Bay and Seattle) never to break even. Maybe this year.



49ERS ELAM, HART, WEBB AND HARDMAN WANT MORE THAN 49 QUARTERBACK SACKS

First off, Manning—thanks to two shoulder operations for bicep tendinitis in his throwing arm—seems sound. He is zipping the ball again, and despite seven years in the league, he is still unafraid to run when there's an opening.

The Saints have a powerful running game (second-year men Chuck Muncie and Tony Galbreath) but only adequate receivers, and the offensive line is weak. The Saints' defense is spotty. If there is a key man here, it's Defensive End Bob Pollard, now in his eighth season. If Pollard and Tackle Derland Moore can generate a consistent pass rush, they may inspire their teammates. And with Dick Nolan—the ex-Giant player, ex-Cowboy assistant coach, ex-head coach of the 49ers—handling the linebackers, another Stram miracle could materialize in short order. But it will be a long while before the Saints upgrade their woeful secondary. That takes good drafts, perceptive trades and time, time, time.

If Manning stays healthy, and if the defense comes through, then the softest schedule in the West could help New Orleans to a good season, maybe 8–6. Otherwise the Saints will be back to 4–10 or, brighter, 5–9.

The Atlanta Falcons, like a few of their avian namesakes, should be classed as an endangered species. Never winners, this year they play eight games against teams strong enough to win divisional titles—if not reach the Super Bowl. The Falcons once again will finish dead last in their division.

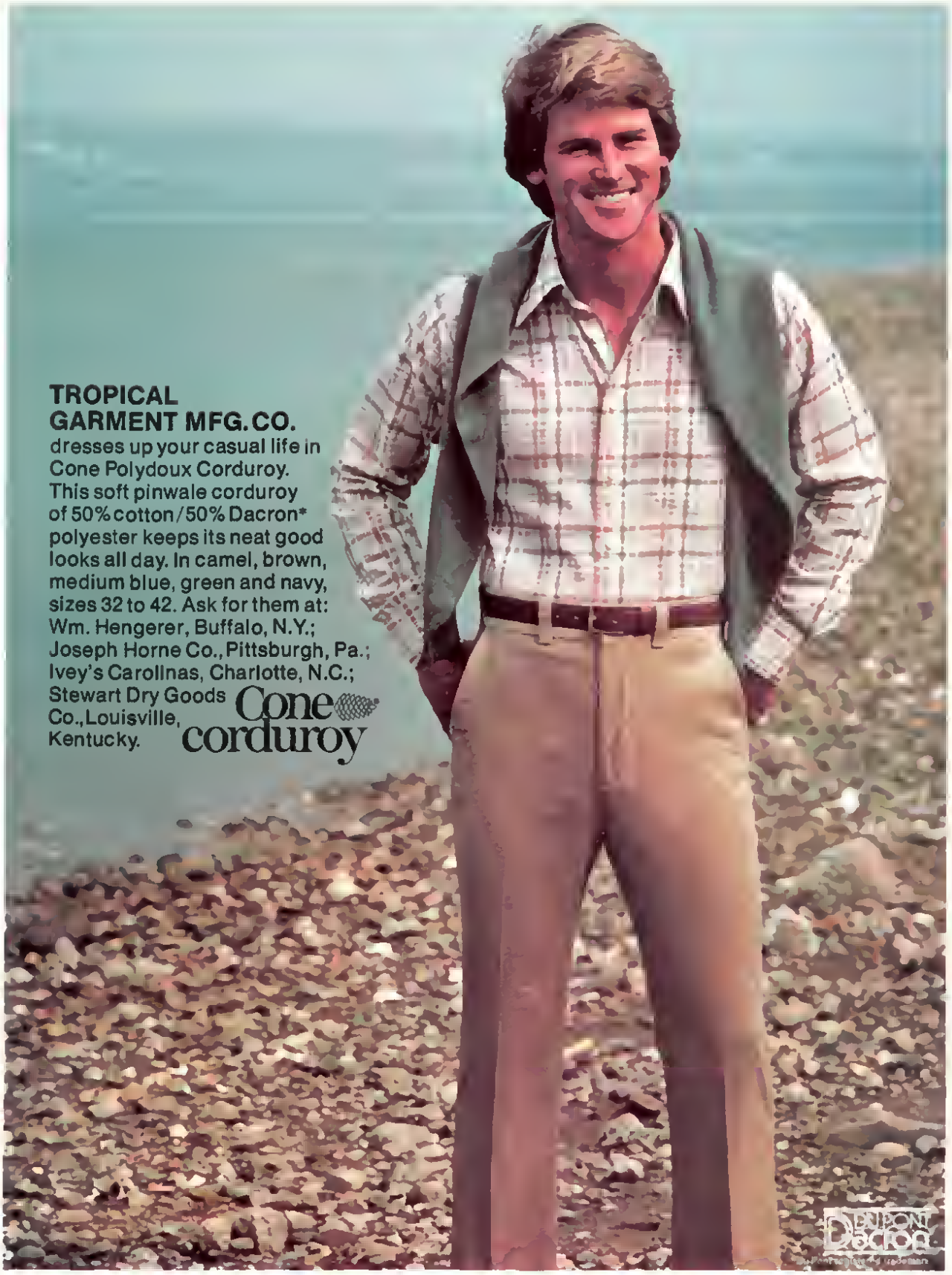
During the off-season, Atlanta completely redid its front office, from head coach to flack. Like Ken Meyer of San Francisco, Leeman Bennett is a former assistant to the Rams' Chuck Knox (he coached the L.A. receivers). Bennett, who at 39 is the NFL's youngest coach, has plugged in the L.A. look, concentrating on ball control and a strong running game (although without the Rams' talent), and, like Knox, he believes in patience and power. That bodes well for the future, but not for this year.

If the Falcons have any strengths worth recounting, they are on offense, particularly at running back where Woody Thompson and Bubba Bean are ably supported by three reliable backups. Quarterback became a problem area, though, when Steve Bartkowski had a knee operation this week.

The offensive line, although firmed up at right tackle by top draft choice Warren Bryant, is at best inconsistent, at worst porous on pass blocking. The Falcons' offensive problems surfaced early as they failed to score a touchdown in their first three exhibitions.

But that's the bright side. Atlanta's chief weakness is at linebacker. Last year, the Falcons were 25th in the 28-team league on defense against the run. Then Tommy Nobis, their one competent linebacker, retired. He couldn't do it all. And besides, he was hurting. Ralph Ortega, a third-year pro, replaces Nobis, and he won't suffer from a lack of work. Led by Claude Humphrey, the Falcons have had an effective pass rush and the addition of rookie Tackle Wilson Faumuina will help.

Oh, yes. Atlanta has good legs in Nick Mike-Mayer and Punter John James. But it seems likely that James will see a lot more action than Mike-Mayer this year and for quite a while to come. **END**



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THEY'VE BOXED THEMSELVES IN



AL RUSH DEFENDS NBC'S DEALINGS WITH PROMOTOR DON KING

How times do change. Four years ago the idea of putting sports on the air during television's prime-time hours elicited, at best, snickers from network programmers. Oh, they'd admit that certain things "would play"—a World Series game, the NBA finals, *Monday Night Football*, the Orange Bowl. But night after night? No way. As anybody who has been viewing the opening two weeks of this TV season knows by now, that kind of thinking is dead. Sports have become almost as endemic to prime time as bionic creatures, private eyes, Rich Little and old Elvis movies.

This week's listings included six hours of boxing on successive evenings. On Tuesday there was CBS's *The Night of the Champions*, featuring the welterweight title bout between Carlos Palomino and Everaldo Costa Azevedo. On Wednesday NBC presented *A Night with the Heavyweights*, involving Ken Norton, Jimmy Young and Ron Lyle. Their involvement, however, did not go so far as fighting each other. Instead, they were to pick on guys named Lorenzo Zanon, Jody Ballard and Stan Ward, and that is as good an indication as any that NBC thinks fights are such a surefire success that any pairings will do. CBS obviously feels the same way. Two weeks before *The Night of the Champions* the network handed out a release about the undercard that read, "Michael Spinks replaces his injured brother and fights Ray Elson."

The two nights of boxing mark only the beginning of things. During the next few weeks there will be more fights, including Muhammad Ali-Earnie Shavers on NBC Sept. 29, which will bring the number of bouts on TV to 12 during a 20-day stretch. "We bought the rights to *A Night with the Heavyweights* and Ali-Shavers because we feel that there is a very large audience for boxing," says Al Rush, NBC's executive vice-president of sports. "We're sure there's an audience for Ali, because when he fought Richard Dunn last year we drew the highest ratings ever for a fight. When we did the Ken Norton-Duane Bobick bout, it also got a tremendous response, though the fight lasted only 58 seconds."

To get *A Night with the Heavyweights*, normally conservative NBC had to deal with Promoter Don King, who has been the target of severe criticism since his U.S. boxing tournament was suspended in April by ABC amid charges of fixes, kickbacks, hyped rankings and falsification of fighters' records.

"Before we bought *A Night with the Heavyweights* from King, we thought it over very carefully," says Rush. "Our conclusion was that, while there were all sorts of allegations against King, he has not been found guilty of anything. We were not putting on a tournament. We were putting on one night of boxing, and Don has had a perfect relationship with us."

King's relationship with ABC caused the network great embarrassment and spurred it to employ Attorney Michael Armstrong, the man who headed up New York's "Serpico" investigation, to look into the boxing tournament. The 327-page Armstrong Report, which was released last week, describes enough nefarious goings-on to keep Charlie's Angels busy for a couple of years. And the Armstrong Report may have uncovered only the tip of this iceberg, because the 10 attorneys, five law students, legal assistant and private detective who did the investigating did not have subpoena powers. As a result, they could not answer some of the most pressing questions about the tournament, including what King's personal involvement may have been in the hanky-panky that resulted in its going off the air. Nonetheless, one of the investigators' conclusions was: "If DKP [Don King Productions] must rely upon people who have been shown to have been involved in irregular or unethical conduct in connection with the Tournament, or upon persons whose primary business is to manage or book fighters, then we believe that DKP cannot be relied upon to produce a national tournament that can meet the standards set by ABC."

If King's operation was not good enough to meet ABC's standards last spring, it is hard to believe that it now measures up for NBC's telecast this week or for ABC's presentation of the King-promoted Norton-Young fight scheduled for Nov. 5. The suspicion is that ethical considerations may have had little weight in NBC's and ABC's decisions to put on these fights. Once again, ratings may have taken precedence. The numbers show that fans are fascinated by boxing, and the networks want to cash in. Because King is one of the few promoters capable of putting together a full card, NBC and ABC continue to do business with him. They made their decisions to do so long before the Armstrong Report appeared, and during a period when it was thought that King himself might be more severely censured by the investigators than he was. Even last week, after the promoter's organization had been strongly criticized in the report, NBC busied itself with a defense of King. The fights must go on.

And they may go on and on, because once a sport makes a splash in prime time, it has a tendency to reappear and reappear. Witness the case of the evening World Series game in 1971 that begat five by 1975. The Series is a once-a-year event, but boxing could be aired once a week if the networks want it that way. And they may, because fans are still attracted by the novelty of fights being shown in the 8-to-11 p.m. period. Before that feeling of newness wears off—as it soon will—it can only be hoped that boxing and TV will remember the fate of *The Friday Night Fights* and resist the urge to inundate the screen with second-rate bouts. **END**



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Mowed down by a Thompson

Rat-a-tat-tat went Washington State's Throwin' Samoan and the 15th-ranked Cornhuskers were bushwhacked 19–10

For those who haven't checked an atlas lately—and especially for those folks in Lincoln, Neb.—American Samoa is a tiny speck in the South Pacific, closer to Australia than to the U.S. and a 5,000-mile swim from Pullman, Wash., where Jack Thompson has wound up playing football for the Washington State Cougars. Thompson was born in Samoa 21 years ago in the town of Tutuila, the grandson of an Englishman and a lady of the island. His first name is actually Siaki, and he is the first quarterback that Tutuila has ever produced.

Keep these facts in mind because they are likely to become topics of nationwide concern. Thompson, you see, throws the football very, very well. And last Saturday he opened his assault on the Heisman Trophy by completing 18 of 30 passes for 174 yards and two touchdowns as the otherwise unheralded Cougars hung a 19–10 upset on 15th-ranked Nebraska.



A handsome and dark-complexioned flinger in the mold of Sonny Sixkiller and Jim Plunkett, Thompson appears ready-made for stardom. He already has a catchy nickname, the "Throwin' Samoan"—surprise!—and he is only a junior. Thompson did not become Washington State's No. 1 quarterback until the fourth game of the 1976 season, yet he ended up completing 208 of 355 passes for a whopping 2,762 yards and 20 TDs. He threw only 14 interceptions and wiped three of Plunkett's Pac-8 records off the books. If Thompson seems an amalgam of all that is good in a quarterback, as those who have seen him say, it is apparently no accident of nature.

"I guess I've borrowed the best elements of many quarterbacks," he says. "Ken Anderson is called a machine because he is so accurate. Bert Jones is not afraid to run with the ball. Terry Bradshaw can really zing it. Joe Namath has the quick release. I also try to emulate Roger Staubach's leadership on the field, but I don't have his quick feet."

If that is Thompson's Achilles' heel, Nebraska certainly did not take advantage of it. That the Cornhuskers were 17-point favorites at game time was largely a reflection of the reputations of the two teams and the fact that the game was being played in Lincoln. Washington State, though only 3–8 last season, sent 19 returning starters onto the field from a team that averaged nearly 24 points a game in '76. And, in the case of last Saturday's game, the home-field edge may even have been negated by the presence of so many Nebraska people along both sidelines.

Washington State's new head coach is Warren Powers, a Cornhusker alumnus who was an assistant to Nebraska's Tom Osborne last year. As often happens in these situations, nine of Powers' assistants also turned out to be Nebraska people, having either coached or played in Lincoln. They included Rich Glover, a 1971-72 All-America, and Terry Luck, a former team captain.

Having coached the Big Red's secondary, Powers was in a unique position to help Thompson exploit it. Powers had preached the blessings of zone coverage,

continued

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but his successor, Lance Van Zandt, changed the strategy overnight. Van Zandt maintained that Cornhusker defensive backs weren't doing enough to help stop the run, and he instituted man-to-man coverage. That approach may work in the Big Eight, where they think a forward pass is just a migrating duck flying overhead. Against Thompson and Washington State, it seemed like poor judgment.

After a scoreless first quarter, Thompson found Flanker Brian Kelly covered by a lone Nebraska cornerback, Ted Harvey, and hit him with a 19-yard touchdown pass. Nebraska came back to tie the game at 7–7 on a 20-yard gallop by Rick Berns. But in the third quarter Kelly, one of four WSU receivers who caught at least 40 passes last fall, got loose from Harvey again. Thompson put the ball in his hands for a 20-yard TD and a 14–7 lead. The Cornhuskers continued to move the ball, ending up with 470 yards to WSU's 294, but a case of the dropsies did them in.

Nebraska had taken the game's opening kickoff and marched 80 yards to the Cougar five. But in what was to become a pattern, I-Back Isaiah M. Hipp, who expects such great things from himself that he now prefers to be called I. M. Hipp, fumbled and Washington State recovered. Another possible Cornhusker touchdown was lost when Quarterback Randy Garcia coughed up the ball just two yards from the goal line. And later, at the other end of the field, Garcia was caught in his end zone for a safety. These frantic events, plus a field goal on each side, closed out the scoring.

It had been a weekend of ambivalent feelings on both sides, and when Nebraska Athletic Director Bob Devaney went to the Washington State locker room after the game it was to offer heartfelt congratulations to a lot of old friends. But before he could get through the exultant mob to the winning coach, the Throwin' Samoan intercepted him. "Thank you for Warren Powers," Thompson said. "Everyone in this room would go to war for him. He never lies and he has us believing in ourselves."

What did Thompson have to say about his own performance? "*Manaia kele lava*," he replied, "which is Samoan for 'That was a good game.' "

Sure, Siaki, we know. Except it sounds more like, "Look out, America, I may erupt at any time."

THE WEEK

by RON REID

MIDWEST Tiny Vanderbilt was supposed to be one of those punching bags Oklahoma whips 68–0 with a mile or two of rushing yardage en route to a national championship. But 11 fumbles, a Sooner record, 104 yards in penalties and enough bad performances to rival *The Gong Show* almost kayoed Oklahoma.

Behind 15–0 in the second quarter, Oklahoma rallied to beat Vanderbilt 25–23. The result embarrassed the Sooners' Barry Switzer and infuriated Vandy's Fred Pancoast. "Mistakes, fumbles, bad execution, fumbles, mistakes," Switzer grumbled. "The worst exhibition of Oklahoma football I've ever seen." Pancoast directed his remarks to the officiating. "You understand I'm not criticizing the officials at this point," he said, "but if I see the things on film that I think I saw out there today, I'm going to do some complaining like you never heard before."

Bad calls or not, Vandy might have pulled off the upset but for two blocked field-goal attempts. The first, a 36-yarder by Greg Martin, was blocked by Cornerback Bud Hebert. Defensive End Barry Burget picked up the loose ball and took off on a 64-yard touchdown run to give Oklahoma a 25–15 lead. In the closing 1:18 Vandy narrowed the deficit to two points and successfully executed an onside kick, but Martin's 53-yard try on the game's final play was blocked by End Reggie Mathis.

Oklahoma's offense, which lost fumbles on its first four possessions, sputtered to 11 points under the direction of Dean Blevins before Switzer, with first-string Quarterback Thomas Lott ineffective because of an ailing leg, called upon freshman Jay Jimerson in the fourth quarter.

The son of OU's assistant athletic director, Jimerson directed the Sooners on their first error-free march, capping a 55-yard drive with a 20-yard touchdown run that gave Oklahoma the lead for the first time.

Performance ran truer to form in Columbia, Mo., where USC, the nation's fourth-ranked team, socked it to Missouri, 27–10, to extend its winning streak to 12 games. Even though Quarterback Pete Woods was lost to a knee injury in the second quarter, the Tigers gave USC a tough time. With six minutes to go, Missouri was on the USC nine-yard line, trailing by 10 but threatening to cut the deficit to three points. At that juncture, freshman Quarterback Phil Bradley, Woods' 18-year-old understudy, fumbled a center snap. USC recovered and used all the remaining time in a 90-yard march to its last touchdown.

Quarterback Rob Hertel, who scored it on a 10-yard run with 17 seconds left, passed for two other touchdowns to make up for three lost fumbles. Tailback Charles White was the Trojans' top ballcarrier with 155 yards on 35 carries and a touchdown.

Terry Miller ran for 189 yards in 25 carries and scored on runs of 16 and 13 yards as Oklahoma State dumped Tulsa 34–17. Linebacker John Corker, with three goal-line tackles, was the Cowboys' stopper on defense.

Second-ranked Michigan clobbered Illinois 37–9 to ruin the coaching debut of Gary Moeller, the Wolverines' defensive coordinator last season. Bo Schembechler's former aide got an early break when Harlan Huckleby fumbled to set up an Illini field goal and a short-lived lead. Huckleby atoned by rushing for 128 yards and two touchdowns, Russell Davis ran for 98 yards and a touchdown and Rick Leach threw two scoring passes.

Woody Hayes spent much of the spring and summer talking about his new speed backfield or two-tailback attack, and for a while against Miami it seemed that the Buckeyes' offense might indeed be more exciting than in the past. But after Tailback/Fullback Jeff Logan and his replacement, sophomore Ricky Johnson, were sidelined with injuries, Ohio State reverted to the cloud-of-dust fullback stuff that sends Hayes into ecstasy and fans into a coma. The Buckeyes parlayed tough defense with Ron Springs' 21-yard touchdown run for a 10–0 victory.

At East Lansing, Michigan State weathered an aerial blitz from Purdue's 18-year-old freshman quarterback, Mark Herrmann, for a 19–14 win. Herrmann, 6′ 5″ and 180 pounds, completed 20 of 32 passes for both Purdue touchdowns and 282 yards. The Spartans intercepted Purdue four times, however, and got the same number of field goals from Hans Nielsen, a Danish import who has kicked 31 three-pointers for MSU.

In other Big Ten openers, Iowa blanked Northwestern 24–0 and Wisconsin beat Indiana 30–14. Minnesota eked out a 10–7 triumph over Western Michigan. In Boulder, Colorado withstood a late rally by Stanford for a 27–21 victory.

1. MICHIGAN (1–0)
2. OKLAHOMA (1–0) 3. OHIO STATE (1–0)

SOUTH A record Neyland Stadium crowd of 84,421 came to Johnny Majors' coaching debut in Knoxville Saturday night. Unfortunately for most of them, so did California, which ruined the party with a 27–17 conquest of Tennessee. Errors of the sort Majors rarely experienced last season at Pittsburgh (four lost fumbles, an interception) plagued his alma mater and led to 10 of the 17 points Cal scored in the third quarter. In contrast, the Golden Bears didn't fumble and were intercepted but once.

Cal Quarterback Charlie Young, who ran

continued

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for two touchdowns and passed for another, broke a 10–10 tie in the third period with a 58-yard touchdown pass to Flanker Floyd Eddings. Young's Volunteer counterpart, sophomore Jimmy Streater, scored on an 80-yard run and gained 141 yards on 12 carries before sitting out most of the second half because of dizziness.

Ninth-ranked Maryland was an 11-point favorite to beat Clemson, but long odds get short shrift in the Tigers' Memorial Stadium, also known as "Death Valley." Indeed, the Terps escaped with a 21–14 victory after substitute Quarterback Larry Dick, replacing hobbled starter Mark Manges in the third quarter, tossed two touchdown passes to overcome a 14–7 deficit.

Bear Bryant says he has quit counting birthdays, but Alabama gave him a gratifying 64th birthday present in Birmingham when the Crimson Tide ended a two-year opening-game slump by routing Mississippi 34–13. Quarterback Jeff Rutledge, who passed for 215 yards and ran for a touchdown, helped avenge last season's 10–7 loss to the Rebels.

South Carolina had played 84 games without shutting out an opponent before Saturday night's 17–0 triumph over Georgia Tech, which paid dearly for five turnovers.

In other games, Kentucky edged North Carolina 10–7, Georgia beat Oregon 27–16, East Carolina nipped Duke 17–16, Auburn stung Arizona 21–10 and Grambling routed Alcorn State 42–17.

1. ALABAMA (1–0)
2. GEORGIA (1–0) 3. MARYLAND (1–0)

SOUTHWEST Darrell Royal is gone and Texas just isn't the same. New Coach Fred Akers has replaced the wishbone with the veer and, wonder of wonders, has his Longhorns throwing the ball.

In overwhelming Boston College 44–0, Texas scored three touchdowns on passes of the sort Royal consistently avoided during his 20 years as the Longhorns' coach. The most spectacular was an 88-yard heave from Jon Aune, a second-string sophomore quarterback who completed six of seven for 168 yards, to End Alfred Jackson. The play came with less than two minutes gone in the fourth quarter and shattered the school record of 80 yards set by Bobby Layne 31 years ago.

Earlier, starting Quarterback Mark McBath connected on a 13-yarder to Ronnie Miksch for Texas' first touchdown and a 29-yard scoring pass to Johnny (Lam) Jones.

Texas fans also got their kicks from Russ Erxleben, who led the nation in punting last season, and from the Texas defense. Erxleben tied his school record with a 57-yard field goal and booted others from 45 and 38 yards. The defense held BC, which upset Texas 14–13 last year, to a total of 104 yards.

A year ago in Lubbock, Texas Tech Quarterback Rodney Allison ran 77 yards for a touchdown the first time he carried the ball against Baylor. Last Saturday at Waco, where the temperature on the field was 112°, Allison waited until his second carry to sprint 54 yards for the score that sent the Red Raiders on their way to a 17–7 victory.

Baylor tied the score at 7–7 on an 80-yard run by Fullback Greg Hawthorne before Allison directed a 75-yard drive that he climaxed with a four-yard touchdown pass to Halfback Jimmy Williams.

Texas A&M unleashed the double punishment of its aggressive defense and 270-pound Fullback George Woodard in a 28–14 conquest of Kansas. The Aggies recovered two Jayhawk fumbles, which were followed by two of Woodard's three touchdown runs.

In other games SMU handed TCU its 12th consecutive loss, 45–21. Texas A&I won its 40th straight by beating Livingston State 21–13. Rice ripped Idaho 31–10, and Lou Holtz, late of the New York Jets, guided Arkansas to a 53–10 rout of New Mexico State.

1. TEXAS TECH (1–0)
2. TEXAS (1–0) 3. TEXAS A&M (1–0)

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

OFFENSE: Army Quarterback Leamon Hall passed for 310 yards and five touchdowns as the Cadets beat Massachusetts 34–10. Hall broke Army's single-game record for touchdown passes as his career record reached 28.

DEFENSE: Linebacker John Corker, a 6′ 6″, 228-pound sophomore, was unblockable in Oklahoma State's 34–17 conquest of Tulsa. His 20 tackles—seven unassisted—included three goal-line stops when the score was close.

EAST Frank Burns of Rutgers, a school with large athletic ambitions, labeled the Colgate game "must win" after his Scarlet Knights were routed by Penn State in an early season opener. But Colgate, whose incentive had smoldered since last Thanksgiving, made the Knights look like turkeys in a 23–0 rout.

Colgate's revenge motive stemmed from last season's 17–9 loss to the Knights, whose 18-game win streak remained intact with the help of an official's error, later admitted.

Rutgers got no assistance this time and its gaffes were its own. Colgate's defense forced four fumbles and recovered three in handing the Knights their first shutout in 35 games.

"We're good but not great," West Virginia Coach Frank Cignetti said of his Mountaineers. Spider fans may not agree. The Mountaineers savaged the University of Richmond 36–0, with 406 yards total offense. Senior Quarterback Dan Kendra passed for two touchdowns and 149 yards and scored himself on a four-yard keeper.

Temple Coach Wayne Hardin also was hoping for better after a rash of bonehead plays led to a 24–20 defeat by Southern Illinois. Leading 20–15 in the first minute of the final quarter, Temple gave up a touchdown on a pass interception and a safety on the ensuing kickoff when Zachary Dixon, who earlier raced 90 yards on a scoring kickoff return, caught the ball at the two and downed it in the end zone.

Temple also lost three of four fumbles and incurred a delay-of-game penalty when Duke Joyner tried to run back a punt after signaling for a fair catch. And the Owls' NCAA record of 106 consecutive extra-point kicks ended when a 15-yard pushing penalty forced Wes Sornisky to attempt his PAT 25 yards from the crossbar.

Army opened its 88th football season by hammering Massachusetts 34–10 for its 500th victory as Quarterback Leamon Hall threw five touchdown passes.

In other games, Navy sank Citadel 21–2, Eastern Kentucky beat Delaware 24–7 and New Hampshire stunned Holy Cross 27–14.

1. PENN STATE (1–0)
2. ARMY (1–0) 3. NEW HAMPSHIRE (1–0)

WEST Those who claim the wishbone offense is not as effective as it used to be will get an argument out of Seattle, which is where Mississippi State unleashed its version of the attack at, over and around Washington for a 27–18 victory.

Bulldog Quarterback Bruce Threadgill, a wishbone magician, twice caught the Huskies looking for Fullback Dennis Johnson coming through the line and zonked them with touchdown passes. He connected with Halfback Len Copeland on a 44-yarder and with Johnson, after a fake, for an 81-yard score.

Washington took an early 6–0 lead and added four field goals by Steve Robbins, but the Bulldogs' ball control kept the game out of the Huskies' reach.

A literally pointless contest in Laramie proved to be out of reach of both Air Force and Wyoming, who played to a scoreless tie. Air Force had the best shot at winning, but Mark Noonan's 37-yard field-goal attempt with four seconds left was short after a high snap from center.

In a Big Sky Conference opener at Pocatello, Idaho, Northern Arizona beat Idaho State 28–7. The Lumberjacks scored three touchdowns in less than three minutes late in the fourth quarter to obliterate a 7–6 deficit.

Elsewhere, Oregon State defeated Syracuse 24–14, Brigham Young blasted Kansas State 39–0, Utah State beat San Jose State 22–10 and Montana State beat North Dakota 21–7.

1. USC (1–0)
2. CALIFORNIA (1–0) 3. BYU (1–0)

Getting fat with the thin man

During the Yankees' surge from third to first, the heavyweight of their rotation has been 5' 11", 158-pound Ron Guidry

From Aug. 7 through the end of last week, the Yankees won 28 of 34 games and moved from third place, five games out, to two ahead in the American League East..During the surge New York got heroics from some expected sources, mainly Centerfielder Mickey Rivers, Third Baseman Graig Nettles and Reliever Sparky Lyle. And when a team goes on a tear, there invariably is a starting pitcher high on the list of streakers. Because the Yanks' staff is loaded with the likes of World Series heroes Catfish Hunter, Don Gullett and Ken Holtzman, it is hardly surprising that New York found a hot arm. The astounding thing is that the limb is attached to the left shoulder of Ron Guidry, a pitcher whose reputation had been as puny as his 5' 11", 158-pound body.



Guidry leads the Yankee staff with 151 strikeouts

With a 5–0 record and a 1.07 ERA during the streak, Guidry (pronounced GID-ree) has been the best Yankee starter. Two of his wins were consecutive complete games in which he did not give up a run or a walk and allowed only one runner as far as third base. The first shutout came on Guidry's 27th birthday—Aug. 28—when he beat Texas 1–0 on two hits. The second was a six-hit 4–0 victory in Minnesota.

In Cleveland last week, Guidry was not as sharp, but his 4–3 10-inning triumph may have been his most impressive performance. He survived a shaky opening inning, in which he gave up his first run in 19 innings and his first walk in 18. During the game, he repeatedly worked out of jams, threw 156 pitches and got by more on grit and guile than on his fastball and control. When a pitcher wins a game like that, it is good evidence that he has arrived as a major-leaguer.

Guidry went to spring training this year with, it seemed, all the qualifications to be a minor-leaguer. He had been 0–1 during a brief stint with New York in 1975 and 0–0 with a 5.63 ERA last season. On top of that, there seemed to be no spot for him in a strong starting rotation. Guidry barely survived the final spring cut and seemed headed for mop-up relief duties. Besides that depressing circumstance and his unimpressive statistics, he had to overcome the fact that he does not look like very much of a pitcher. The Yankee pinstripes, which only serve to accentuate his thinness, make him look like an exclamation point with a mustache.

But with the Yankee mainstays either being cuffed around or ailing, Manager Billy Martin decided to give Guidry occasional starts. At the All-Star break he was 6–5 and had pitched only three complete games, certainly nothing to write home to Lafayette, La. about.

Since then he has been the Yankees' edge in the division race, winning seven of eight decisions while withstanding the pressure of the scramble for first and the tumult of the New York clubhouse. Guidry has taken the lead among Yankee starters with a 2.94 ERA, and his 151 strikeouts in only 177 innings tops all New York pitchers. Although his two best minor league seasons (1973 with Kinston in the Carolina League and 1975 with Syracuse in the International) added up to a record of only 13–11, Guidry is now 13–6 with New York.

Despite his build, Guidry's big pitch is a smoking fastball. "Nobody believes Ron throws as hard as he does," says Nettles. "It's fun to watch teams face him for the first time. They're so surprised by his fastball that they have a hard time handling it." Indeed they do.

THE WEEK

(Sept. 4-10)

NL EAST An aching back almost kept Steve Carlton of Philadelphia (5–3) from facing St. Louis. "You'll have to nurse him along," Pitching Coach Ray Rippelmeyer warned Catcher Tim McCarver. As it turned out, Carlton needed no nursing, striking out 14 Cardinals and singling twice during an 11–4 win.

Four days earlier Carlton had homered and singled as he won his 20th game, 11–1 in Pittsburgh. Other nifty pitchers were Larry Christenson, who beat New York 6–2 on two hits, and rookie Randy Lerch, who needed only 97 pitches to subdue St. Louis 3–1.

Rich Gossage of Pittsburgh (4–4) was almost untouchable, allowing one hit and striking out 10 in 6⅔ innings of relief. In the process, he racked up his 19th and 20th saves. Gossage got his 10th win when Dale Berra, Yogi's son, singled in the 11th to knock off the Phillies 5–4.

With Reliever Bruce Sutter's split-fingered fastball at its dive-bombing best and pinch hitters coming through, Chicago (4–3) held third place. Sutter received credit for two wins after batters who had hit for him scored. Dave Rosello singling in the 10th and coming across on Bill Buckner's sacrifice fly to topple Montreal 3–2 and Gene Clines slamming a two-run homer in the ninth to defeat New York 10–8. Against the Expos, Sutter struck out six batters in a row, including three in the ninth on nine pitches. Sutter also earned his 27th save after pinch-hitter Jose Cardenal drove in the go-ahead run in the eighth inning of a 2–1 win in San Diego.

St. Louis (2–5) beat San Francisco 8–2, thanks to former Giants Ken Reitz (three doubles, four RBIs) and Dave Rader (three runs,

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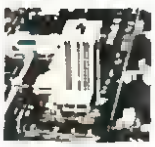
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Sandusky, OH	N Amer. Sail & Power	Sept. 15-18	Mt Clemens, MI	Great Lakes Sailboat	Oct 13-16
Houston, Tx.	International In-Water	Sept 15-18	Miami, Fla	Dinner Key	Oct 14-18
Seattle, Wa	Afloat-Lake Union	Sept 15-18	Long Beach, Ca	SCMA Sailboat Show	Oct 21-30
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1 Answers to the questions may be found by looking at the front label on any bottle of J&B Scotch Whisky Labels may be obtained by requesting same from Labels PO Box 1392 L I C , N Y 11101 2 Enter as often as you wish but each entry must be mailed in a separate envelope Mail to Joyful Boating, PO Box 1263 *L.I.C N Y 11101 Entries must be postmarked no later than* Nov 15 1977, and received by Dec 1, 1977 3 Winners will be determined in random drawings from among all correctly answered and eligible entries conducted by Marden-Kane an independent judging organization whose decisions are final and will be notified by mail 4 First Second and Third prize winners will be required to execute an affidavit of eligibility and release Prizes are non-transferable only one prize to a family and no substitution for prizes The odds of winning will be determined by the number of correctly answerad entries received All prizes (valued at $37 000) will be awarded 5 Local State and Federal taxes if any are the responsibility of winners 6 Sweepstakes open to residents of the United States Employees and their families of Paddington Corp their advertising agencies, liquor wholesalers and retailers Marden-Kane and Wesco Associates are not eligible Contest void in Ga Ca Mo Pa Ut Va and wherever prohibited or restricted by law All federal state and local laws and regulations apply 7 Entrants *must be of legal drinking age under the laws of their home* state 8 A list of winners will be furnished two months after the close of the contest to anyone who sends a stamped self-addressed envelope to Joyful Boating Winners List PO Box 1364 L I C N Y 11101 Please do not send entries to this address 9 The Official Entry form may not be raproduced

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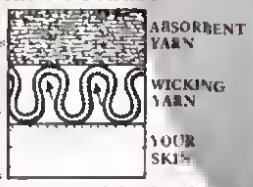
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two hits and an RBI). Ted Simmons walloped three home runs, one as Tom Underwood held off the Cubs 3–1.

Ellis Valentine of Montreal (4–3), returning after missing 22 games because of a bruised foot, hit a two-run homer to zap New York 4–3 and homered twice to beat Pittsburgh 4–2. Don Stanhouse tossed 8⅓ innings of scoreless relief while saving three games. Despite allowing a runner to walk home from third when no one covered the plate and executing a two-out "double play," the Expos beat the Cubs 4–2.

About the only goal the Mets (2–5) have is to avoid 100 defeats for the season. Steve Henderson's three RBIs enabled them to throttle the Expos 5–3, and a five-run ninth gave the New Yorkers a 7–2 win over the Cubs.

PHIL 88–53 PITT 81–62 CHI 75–65
ST.L 74–68 MONT 65–76 NY 55–86

NL WEST With a 12½-game lead, the Dodgers (5–2) contemplated postseason award possibilities: Comeback Player of the Year for Dusty Baker, MVP for Reggie Smith and the Cy Young award for Tommy John. All three enhanced their prospects last week. Baker, who had four homers and 39 RBIs in 1976, hammered his 22nd home run and Smith his 27th as John beat Pittsburgh 8–2. Smith hit No. 28 in a 3–2 win in San Diego. Baker homered in the next three games and increased his RBIs to 71. Again benefiting from one of Baker's clouts, this one a three-run shot, was John (18–5, 2.48 ERA), who beat the Reds 4–1. Getting in some pokes of his own was Ron Cey, whose three homers gave him 28.

While the Dodgers reduced their magic number to eight, Willie McCovey of the Giants (2–5) increased some pertinent figures of his own. Hitting like the Stretch of bygone days, the 39-year-old McCovey slammed five homers and had a dozen RBIs. In the process he picked up his 2,000th hit and his 26th homer, the 491st of his career.

Following 5–1 and 8–3 losses by Cincinnati (3–4) in Houston, Sparky Anderson said he felt "humiliated" and added, "It takes a lot to embarrass me." Pete Rose was within 25 hits of his latest goal, a ninth 200-hit season that would equal Ty Cobb's record. George Foster (*page 18*) erased Johnny Bench's team mark for right-handed sluggers with his 45th and 46th home runs.

Excellent pitching enabled Houston (6–1) to close to within 3½ games of second-place Cincinnati. In those victories, the Astro staff yielded only seven runs and six extra-base hits, struck out 20, walked 10 and held batters to a .173 average. Among the wins were a three-hitter by Mark Lemongello and Joe Sambito against the Giants, five- and four-hitters by Joe Niekro over the Expos and Giants, and a six-hitter by Lemongello against the Reds. Since becoming a starter on July

continued

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24, Niekro has been 8–2 with a 2.57 ERA. After Art Howe, a .260 batter, was walked intentionally, Roger Metzger, a .187 hitter, slammed a bases-loaded triple that ensured a 7–1 win over San Diego. It was Metzger's fifth triple, all against the Padres.

Catcher Dave Roberts of San Diego (2–5) topped off his .417 hitting with a three-run homer to topple Houston 9–5. Rollie Fingers got his 32nd save in that game. Rookie Bob Dwchinko did not allow a Dodger beyond first base as he nailed down a two-hit 1–0 win.

With Gary Matthews providing much of the offense, Dick Ruthven of Atlanta (4–3) was a double winner. Matthews drove in two runs as Ruthven beat the Giants 4–0 while allowing only three singles. Matthews had four RBIs when Ruthven held off the Padres 9–6. Two homers by Jeff Burroughs brought his total to 37, and 12 strikeouts by Phil Niekro gave him a club-record 231.

LA 87–55 CIN 75–68 HOUS 71–71
SF 65–78 SD 63–81 ATL 53–89

AL EAST All three contenders came through with a pair of shutouts, and two of them—the Red Sox and Orioles—walloped 13 and 12 home runs, respectively. The Yankees (5–3) hit only five homers and had to scramble for their wins. Don Gullett returned from the disabled list to pitch a two-hit 4–0 victory over Minnesota, in which Cliff (Drop Over Some Time) Johnson hit a grand slam. Johnson homered again as Mike Torrez (16–12) beat Toronto 2–0 on three hits. In between were a pair of 4–3 squeakers in Cleveland. Reggie Jackson may finally feel at home. After a three-run homer during an 8–3 defeat of the Indians, Jackson was greeted warmly by several Yankees. One was archrival Thurman Munson, who said, "September's the time to play ball and not worry about other stuff."

Boston (8–1) played magnificent September ball and moved to within two games of New York. Rookie Don Aase (5–1) yielded only eight hits as he won twice, 8–0 in Toronto and 7–1 over Detroit. Reggie Cleveland concluded a doubleheader whitewashing of the Blue Jays with a 6–0 five-hitter. The Red Sox took another twin bill, 5–1 and 8–6 against the Tigers, as Bill Campbell recorded his 25th and 26th saves. When Carlton Fisk and George Scott hit back-to-back homers, it was the 16th time the Sox had accomplished that feat this season, a big league record. Three homers by Jim Rice, who hit two in one game for the seventh time this year, gave him the league lead with 37.

Ken Singleton of the Orioles (7–2) batted .424, had three homers and extended to 46 the number of consecutive games in which he had been on base. Rookie Catcher Dave Skaggs drove in five runs as the Birds beat the Tigers 6–2 in 11 innings behind Scott McGregor. Eddie Murray homered three times, finishing off Detroit 7–5 with a two-run shot in the ninth. He also had a game-tying single in the bottom of the ninth against Cleveland, a game Doug DeCinces ended moments later with an RBI single for a 6–5 victory. Rudy May (16–12) defeated Detroit 5–0 and Cleveland 7–1, and Jim Palmer (15–11) shut out the Tigers 4–0.

Detroit (2–8) unveiled three newcomers, Catcher Lance Parrish, Shortstop Alan Trammell and Second Baseman Lou Whitaker. They combined for 12 hits in 24 trips to the plate, and Parrish homered and drove in five runs during a 12–5 drubbing of Baltimore.

On Hate the Yankees Day in Cleveland, the Indians (2–6) swept a doubleheader. Jim Kern earned his 18th save in the opener, a 4–3 victory, and won his eighth game as the Indians scored twice in the eighth inning of the second game for a 5–4 win.

Sixto Lezcano, who missed 48 games because of a broken hand, homered and had two singles on his first day back to carry Milwaukee (2–3) to a 6–5 decision over California. Moose Haas evened his record at 10–10 with a three-hit 3–1 triumph in Oakland.

Toronto's only two wins in eight tries were both noteworthy. The first, Dave Lemanczyk's 3–2 victory over Boston, ended an 11-game losing streak. Then the Blue Jays set club records for hits (20) and runs as they flattened the Yankees 19–3. Roy Howell drove in nine runs (the most by anyone in the league this year) with his fifth and sixth homers, two doubles and a single. In that game Ron Fairly became the 96th player to reach 1,000 RBIs.

NY 87–55 BOS 85–57 BALT 83–58 DET 67–76
CLEV 65–78 MIL 60–86 TOR 47–92

AL WEST With Kansas City (7–0) rollicking to a team-record 11-game win streak and virtually locking up first place, everything became a cause for levity, even a beaning of Hal McRae. "You can get drunk tonight and not have to worry about a hangover," George Brett told McRae. "Your head's going to hurt anyway." A $5 fine was levied against Pitcher Randy McGilberry, recently up from Omaha, for asking if the second games of doubleheaders were seven-inning affairs as they are in the minors. Mitigating that financial setback were McGilberry's two scoreless innings of relief in Paul Splittorff's 10–0 win over the Mariners.

For the most part, it was Kansas City opponents who suffered lumps and losses. Darrell Porter, who hit three homers last season, slugged four in two days in Seattle to increase his total to 15. He batted .524 during the week. Al Cowens was also on a rampage, unloading his 20th and 21st home runs, scoring nine times, driving in 10 runs and hitting .407. After a 10–1 laugher in Minnesota, Splittorff (14–6) had a 13–2 record since May 20.

It was not Centerfielder Chet Lemon's fault that Chicago (4–5) fell eight games back. Lemon threw out two runners at the plate during a 2–1 win in Oakland, and in a 7–2 defeat of the A's, he reached over an eight-foot wall to turn a home run into an out.

Texas (3–4) swept a doubleheader in Seattle, Doyle Alexander (14–10) taking the 5–1 opener on a four-hitter and Roger Moret breezing 7–1. With the Twins' infield overshifted, Willie Horton took two rare shots to the opposite field. The results: his 13th homer and a run-scoring double as the Rangers prevailed 4–3.

Despite 5–4 and 7–4 triumphs over Texas, Minnesota (2–4) skidded to fourth place. Paul Thormodsgard (11–10) was the victor in the first of the wins, and Dave Goltz (17–8) got the decision in the other.

Arm problems caught up with Nolan Ryan and Frank Tanana of California (5–2). After giving up just one hit in 6⅓ innings, Ryan was tagged for successive Chicago hits as his forearm "tightened up." To the rescue came Dave LaRoche, who got his 14th save while wrapping up a 2–0 win for Ryan. That was the first shutout loss for the White Sox, who were trying to become the first team since the 1932 Yankees to go through a season without being blanked. The victory was Ryan's 19th, and lowered his ERA to 2.63, second only to the league-leading 2.54 of Tanana, who was told to rest his weary arm for 10 days. Bobby Bonds socked his 34th homer

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

CARLTON FISK: Realizing he wasn't "as strong as in May," the Boston catcher opened his stance and hit with renewed vigor, a pair of two-homer games, 18 RBIs (seven in an 11–2 rout of Toronto) and a .577 average.

and stole his 33rd and 34th bases. Don Baylor hit three homers and batted .409.

Because they said they wished to play elsewhere next season, Doc Medich and Bill North of Oakland (3–4) were reprimanded by owner Charlie Finley. Medich was placed on irrevocable waivers, and North was benched. No team claimed Medich, so he was used in relief, hurled four scoreless innings and gained his second win of the week as the A's beat the Brewers 4–1. Mitchell Page drove in two runs and stole three bases in Medich's earlier 8–7 victory over Chicago and hit his 18th and 19th homers to help beat Detroit 7–5. The A's mini-surge moved them out of the cellar. Said the unimpressed North, "I see a light at the end of the tunnel. It is called October."

What Seattle (2–6) pitchers saw were more home runs. Fifteen gopher balls gave the Mariner staff 176, 44 short of the major league mark set by Kansas City in 1964. But Seattle hit eight homers of its own, including three by Lee Stanton, who raised his total to 23.

KC 86–54 CHI 78–62 TEX 77–63 MINN 77–65
CAL 67–71 OAK 55–84 SEA 56–89

Bringing in the New Year with a bang

The PGA celebrated the "end" of its season by hosting the $300,000 World Series end, lest auld acquaintance be forgot, the author recalls the good times

What Deane Beman needs to do as overlord of the PGA tour is move New Year's Eve to Labor Day. Among other things, this would complicate college football, putting the Rose Bowl ahead of the regular season, but there may be no other way for Beman to convince everyone that the 1977 pro golf tour ended two weeks ago with the World Series at Firestone Country Club in Akron. What Arnold Palmer and all those other pros were doing in Endicott, N.Y. last week playing the standard 72 holes of golf for the standard $200,000 may be a bit difficult for Beman to explain, particularly to all those people who think Arnold Palmer invented the game and then lost it to Jack Nicklaus in a side bet.

Still, Beman has been asking the golf fan to accept other equally strange things. Not especially in order of importance, they are: a World Series of Golf exists that is so potentially prestigious it "transcends," according to Beman, the Grand Slam tournaments; a Tournament Players Championship exists that is going to become the "fifth major"; and there are three significant and separate golf seasons—the Winter, Spring and Summer tours. There are elements of truth in each of the above. The problem lies in selling the act to the public, and even that may be accomplished in time. Certainly Beman deserves credit for trying.

But two things are happening at once. The 1977 tour is not over so far as money earnings are concerned. Tom Watson, with $305,428 in "official" money—the British Open doesn't count, which is hard enough for some of us to accept—still has a chance to break Johnny Miller's record of $353,021. But the 1978 tour has already begun in terms of winning that Winter thing and qualifying for next year's World Series.

It is entirely possible that none of this matters as long as there are those Big Four tournaments, the Masters, the U.S. Open, the British Open and the PGA, which come in that order every year and give the sport its weeks of special excitement. The other weeks have always belonged to the Gil Morgans and most likely always will.

No matter when it began or when it ends, 1977 happens to have been as thrilling and unique a year as golf has ever produced. To touch on a few major episodes, it was the year of steadily shocking low scores, from Al Geiberger's 59 at Memphis to Tom Watson's 268 (and Nicklaus' 269) in the British Open; the year of Hubert Green's death-threat U.S. Open; the year of Lanny Wadkins' sudden-death PGA; the year of Bruce Lietzke's coming to life; the year of comebacks by Lee Trevino and Tom Weiskopf as well as by Wadkins; the year of Johnny Miller's disappearance; and, more bizarre than anything else, the year that Jack Nicklaus went to the 71st hole tied for the lead in three major championships (the Masters, British Open and PGA) and *did not win any of them.*

Overall, of course, it was Tom Watson's year, and that, too, was good for the game. Matinee idols have been hard to come by with Nicklaus around. If you totaled up all of the money Watson has taken this year, he would be nearing $350,000. In one stretch he captured three tournaments in a row—the Western, then an event in Barcelona called El

continued



Lanny Wadkins looked a jolly good fellow after shooting a course-record 267 to win at Firestone

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Prat Cup, and then that British Open in which he and Nicklaus pushed each other beyond the boundaries of credibility.

But Watson aside, there can be no question that a younger group of stars is taking over. A telling statistic is that 20 of the 38 events that have been played to date have been won by men in their 20s. Watson, who just turned 28, certainly helped the figure along, but Wadkins, Lietzke, Ben Crenshaw, Jerry Pate, Bill Kratzert and Mark Hayes, to list the most impressive of the new wave, made their contributions.

In what might be called the Nicklaus Lottery, this would seem to be a good time to pause and contemplate some of the new heroes. It is fairly safe to say that none of them is going to match what Nicklaus has done; the golfer who can do that may not have been born yet. But they are an exciting and likeable gang, all of them personable, articulate and talented. And they are going to give the game a continuing combination of pleasure and suspense the likes of which it has not known since Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, Byron Nelson, Lloyd Mangrum, Jimmy Demaret and assorted Lawson Littles were thrashing around trying to decide who was No. 1 and who was 1A. It took Hogan about 15 years to straighten that out.

Watson might not wind up the champion of the present era, but he has the early lead with three major titles. There are those who think his swing is too upright, although no one found much fault in the fact that Nelson's was. As for his character, Watson seems to have more self-control than most of his contemporaries. It is stunningly refreshing to hear him say, "If I'm not playing well in my estimation, then I don't think I deserve to win a tournament and it doesn't bother me if I come close and lose. I know I shouldn't have been there in the first place."

Because of Watson's year and the fact that he jarred Nicklaus twice in the majors, he has been rather inaccurately put in the same category as Lee Trevino and Johnny Miller, two others who came along and briefly interrupted Nicklaus' appointment with immortality. But Watson appears to be neither as unpredictable and erratic as Trevino, nor as streaky and moody as Miller. Tom may not go away. And if he does, he may not stay gone very long.

Admirers of the swing, grip and setup tend to think that nothing is beyond the grasp of Pate. Jerry has won two major championships, the U.S. Amateur and U.S. Open, and he is the youngest (24) of those with pretensions to greatness. Pate is strong and cocky as well as stylish. A shoulder injury slowed him down this year, but that may have done him a favor. It gave him a chance to relax and get to be one of the guys.

Another good thing that happened to golf in 1977 was the return of Wadkins. Like Pate, Lanny has two majors now, the U.S. Amateur and the PGA he took from Gene Littler. By doing so, he tied none other than Nicklaus in a couple of odd achievements. Nicklaus and Wadkins are the only golfers ever to have won Amateur and PGA trophies. Also, by winning the PGA, Lanny made the Ryder Cup and World Cup teams. Before he turned pro, he played on the Walker Cup and World Amateur Cup teams. Nicklaus is the only other golfer to have been a member of those four international squads. Put that in your practice bag of trivia.



Watson must play on to set the money mark

Lanny is the least stylish golfer of the youth corps, but he's the fastest player in the Western hemisphere and there is nothing wrong with trying to speed up a round. He's cocky like Pate and a lot more lippy, but he can be charming once you get to know him. Only Wadkins could have watched Weiskopf shoot a 29 on the first nine holes of the last round in the World Series and stand up to it, outlast it, and go on to fire a 65 of his own and demolish the course and the select field for the tour's richest first prize, $100,000. There's a gambler and a tough competitor in Wadkins, as well as a colorful character struggling to climb out in the form of a Southern-fried, grits-nourished Trevino.

The last of the youngsters who demand the most attention is Crenshaw, and in some ways he has become the most puzzling. He is supposed to have done what Watson, Pate and Wadkins have begun to do—collect major championships. He has yet to win one, however. Crenshaw has been close, which means he eventually will succeed, but for all his popularity, he is suffering a mild case of "Watsonitis." Tom and he are close friends and Watson's success may be affecting Ben's game. Even so Crenshaw is blessed with a putting touch that makes even Nicklaus swoon. But he has problems to overcome: keeping his tee shot on the planet when he most needs to, and harnessing a temper of the kind that Bobby Jones once had and described as "searing the soul."

None of this is to suggest that Lietzke, Hayes, Kratzert or any number of others can't use 1978 to move into the elite, and it is not to insinuate that such mainstays of the tour as Weiskopf, Green, Hale Irwin and Raymond Floyd—even Miller, wherever he is—have become aged and decrepit overnight. Like Hogan, who blossomed late in his career, their grandest moments may still be ahead of them.

As for the tour itself, it is actually going to change very little. We can expect the TPC to attract the strongest field of the year and to grow in stature, with Jacksonville as a permanent home and mid-March as a permanent date. The Tournament of Champions at La Costa will continue to be golf's equivalent of the All-Star Game. A Philadelphia or Pleasant Valley Classic will continue to be "designated" immediately after the British Open, as if the sponsors want to punish those U.S. pros who have a sense of history. As for the World Series and everyone's hopes for it to rise in stature and mark at least the *emotional* end of the year, that's going to take time. The event has a nice hunk of sculpture for a trophy and a purse that would make even an Arab blink, but no more than 20 players have qualified for the field to date. So all that it has transcended so far is a Grand Slam consisting of Kemper, Quad Cities, Doral and Hartford.

But that's a start, Deane. **END**

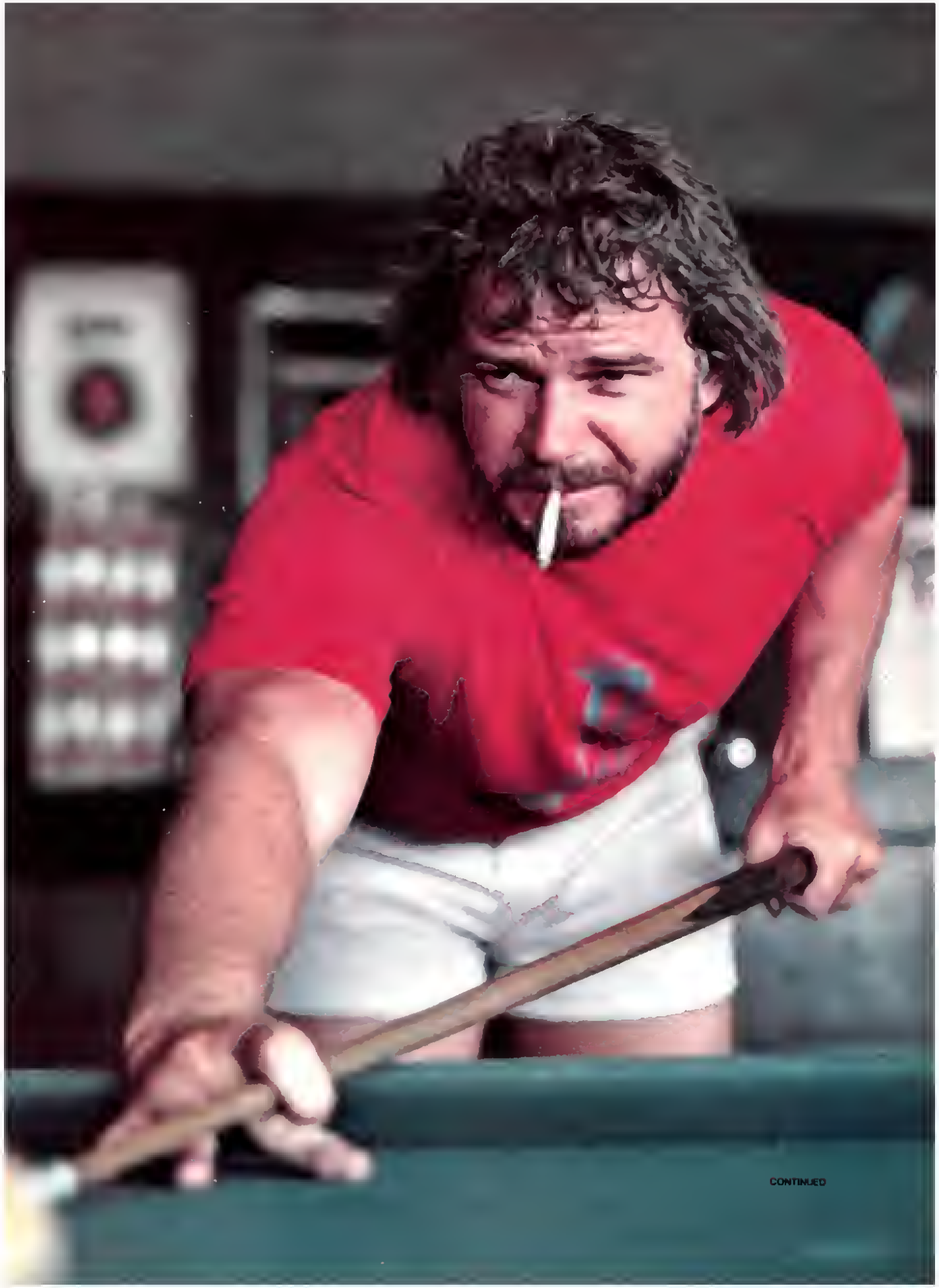
GETTIN' NOWHERE FAST

by ROBERT F. JONES



What counts, says Oakland Quarterback Kenny Stabler, is the getting there. Back home in Alabama, "there" is the Pink Pony, where Stabler sips Scotch with Wickedly Wonderful Wanda, or the Shelter Cove Marina, for a game of 8-ball, or the Intracoastal Waterway, over which he roars in his Boogie

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES DRAKE


CONTINUED

The black Chevy Silverado pickup burbles down main street. Past the sun-faded feed and grain store, where less elegant trucks stand scarred and dusty while their owners dip snoose in the shade, comparing notes on drought damage Past the sporting-goods store with its display of heavy handguns and shiny fishing lures. Past the church, the high school and the obligatory but somehow anachronistic shopping center, where young housewives in curlers and short shorts stride purposefully through the heat with a baby on one hip and a bag of groceries on the other. The driver of the Silverado studies the scene closely. As if feeling his eyes on them, some of the townsfolk turn and stare at the truck. After a moment, their faces inevitably break into wide country grins.

"Hey there, Kenny!"

"Hoo boy, Snake!"

The driver acknowledges them with a wave of his free hand. Actually the hand is not fully free. The big knuckles bulge around a beaded can of beer, second of the morning though it is scarcely 9 a.m "This is home," says Kenny Stabler. "I'll die here."

The flat tone of the statement, issuing as it does from a face masked by a grizzled brown beard and mirrored sunglasses, raises questions. Does the premier quarterback of the NFL, the 1976 Most Valuable Player, the star of Super Bowl XI, whose deft passes and clever calls eviscerated the Minnesota Vikings, mean that he's outgrown his hometown? That the rustic pleasures of Foley, Ala (pop. 4,000)—farming corn and soybeans; hunting doves, quail, woodcock, snipe and ducks in the nearby fields and sloughs; fishing bream and bass and speckled sea trout; eating boiled shrimp and fried oysters and smoked mullet, drinking more beer a day than any four Milwaukeeans; boogieing late into the night in roadhouses; racing boats and trucks, and anything else that moves, with other good old boys—is beginning to pall? That he would die of boredom if he had to live here year-round?

Not a bit of it

"I love the place," says Stabler, gunning the motor as he hits the edge of town. "It's got everything I'll ever need. Come on, let's get some beer and go for a boat ride "

The week shot by like a long wet blur. Through it ran the sounds of Stablerian pleasure: the steady gurgle of upturned beer bottles, the clack and thunk of pool balls, the snarl of outboard motors, the whiny cadences of country music. At the end of it, anyone following in Stabler's wake would be ready for a body transplant: liver and lights, heart and kidneys, eardrums—maybe even a few new teeth.

Since it is virtually impossible to catch Stabler at rest, any portrait of him must convey his nonstop motion To that extent he epitomizes his nickname "Snake." Try to get, say, a blue racer in repose for an interview. All you'll come away with is an impression of flickering tongue and a sapphirine slithering through the weeds



Stabler flew over the water in his Boogie but couldn't win No matter, Wickedly Wonderful Wanda was waiting as a consolation prize



It began in Memphis, where Stabler was expected to perform in the pro-am of the Danny Thomas-Memphis Classic. Stabler was waiting at the airport He was, of course, in the bar He had been there since noon. It was now close to 5 p.m. Surrounded by reeling pals, beautiful girls and an array of empty or partially drained glassware—beer bottles, Bloody Marys, Salty Dogs, Seven and Sevens—



Bear Bryant said that when Stabler was at Bama he too often left his passing game in a parked car

he grinned at a newcomer. "You're late," he exulted. "Thank God. Here"—he unwrapped his thick left arm from a petite blonde, who emerged like a bauble from the shadow of his armpit—"meet Wanda." She smiled demurely, then stuck out her tongue.

The next morning a caravan of Continental Mark Vs wound erratically through southeastern Memphis. "Where the hayull is the golf course?" snarled a Southern voice. "Danged if *Ah* know," answered another. "Turn on the goldurned *ayer* conditioner," gasped a third. "It's runnin' full blast, you knucklehead!" was the response.

"Wayull, shore," continued Bear Bryant, as if he hadn't been interrupted. "Ah remember that boy. He looked like a good 'un but he always left his football game in some parked car the night before we played. Ah remember that Auburn game in. . . ." Bryant, Stabler's coach during his college All-America days at Alabama, was paired with Stabler for the pro-am. His deep, hoarse, mellifluous voice, eroded by hard living and the football wars of a quarter of a century, filled the car with meaningless magic, reminiscence. It was the only alleviant to the nightmare of the ride. Stabler giggled like a schoolboy at the great man's mots.

Later, under a scorching sun, Stabler quit short of nine holes. A tremendous roar had gone up moments before his retirement from the golf match. Ex-President Gerald Ford had just shot a hole in one. Playing behind him, Stahler stopped. His own shots were snaking into the rough. He pleaded "migraine."

"Hayull," grumped Bear in mock chagrin as Kenny was departing for the clubhouse, "Ah was gonna pull that one myself but you beat me to it."

The ride back to the motel is a montage of hysterical blasphemies and hollow pauses while people catch their wind. One of the passengers, a fat man named "Philadelphia Phil," pours sweat and outrageous jokes in equal profusion. During one of the lulls, Stahler turns and eyes his entourage. "Let's blow this pop stand," he says. "We'll clear out of here tonight and head back home. We've had three days in Las Vegas and now this. Too much. I want to just lay back and maybe drive my boat some. I'm one of your clean-living NFL quarterbacks and I need to replenish my physical *ree*sources."

"Sure you are," says Henry Pitts, Stahler's lawyer and good buddy from Selma, Ala. "Sure you do. I'll have you out of here and home by midnight. But meanwhile let's stop and grab us a six-pack."

Shortly after midnight, emerging from the airport at Pensacola, Fla. on his way home, Stahler is haled to the curb by a traffic cop. He's just made a left turn, the cop informs him, on a red light. Stabler produces his license with decorum—no protest, no mention of who he is or what he'd done to become it. The cop writes him up. "Now take care, heah?" the cop says, unsmiling.

"Shore," says Kenny. Then he smiles into the dark. "Win a few, lose a few."

Stabler is eating a fried-oyster sandwich in the Pink Pony Pub. A pitcher of draft beer sweats on the table before him. Both sandwich and beer are disappearing at a remarkable rate. He is clad in a red T shirt with a silvery cobra silk-screened on the chest, its hood opening and closing to his swallows, white shorts and a pair of battered flip-flops. This is the uniform of the day when he's at home. The Pink Pony Pub dominates the beachfront of Gulf Shores, Ala., a resort-cum-fishing community south of Foley. A rickety string-pier extends into the Gulf of Mexico. Milky blue water laps the dunes of the offshore islands between Mobile Bay and Pensacola. Girls in bikinis bake on the beach, turning slowly, voluptuously. Stahler never misses a move.



Son, when I throw like this, Freddie catches it

Twice divorced and now living just up the coast from Gulf Shores with the

continued

blonde girl named Wanda—"Wickedly Wonderful Wanda," as she styles herself, but more prosaically, Wanda Blalock, age 23, from Robertsdale—he eschews the married state or any demanding facsimile thereof. He likes to watch girls. But now his anatomical studies are interrupted by a lean, middle-aged man who plunks himself down at the table to chat. Denzil Hollis was Stabler's baseball, basketball, track and football coach in junior high. "That was when I gave him the nickname 'Snake,' " says Denzil. "Back in the eighth or ninth grade. He'd run 200 yards to score from 20 yards out." He slaps Stabler's thick gut. "Skinny as a snake too, back then. Straight up from top to bottom, and when he turned sideways, he weren't no thicker than a airmail letter."

Even in 1968, when Stabler first appeared on the Oakland Raiders' roster, he was snake-slim—6' 3" by 185 pounds. Now he weighs 215. "I've been working with weights," he says. "You can't play quarterback in the league at anything under 200 these days. The stronger you are, the more muscle you got around those joints, the less likely you are to get hurt."

In high school, Stabler actually achieved greater renown as a baseball player than for his football skills. He was a smoking southpaw pitcher who, with a mediocre squad, won nine games in his senior year, racking up 125 strikeouts and five shutouts on speed alone. The only loss that Don Sutton of Clio, Ala. ever suffered in high school was a 1–0 game to Stabler and Foley, with Stabler striking out 16 and Sutton 14. "When I was 17," Stabler says, flatly, not boasting, "the Pittsburgh Pirates offered me $50,000 to sign. But by then I'd gotten to like football. And I wanted to play for Coach Bryant. If it hadn't been for sports, I wouldn't have gone to college. My dad was a mechanic in a garage up to Foley, and I'd have followed him, I'm sure. I went to college to play football, not for education. That may have been wrong, but that's the way it was. I always wanted to play pro ball, and I've done it." He finished up the pitcher of beer. "Come on, let's get out on the water."

En route to the Bear Point Marina, where Stabler moors his V-hulled, 150-hp outboard racing boat, *Boogie*, he pulls to a stop beside a dank, reed-grown tarn. A chain-link fence surrounds the pond, and a neatly lettered white sign proclaims CHARLIE.

"Charlie's a 12-foot alligator, something of a local celebrity," says Stabler. "We'll see if he's home." He rattles the fence and hoots a few times, but the big 'gator doesn't appear. "Maybe he's taken a stroll into town for a Big Mac," says Stabler. All that moves in the black water is a soft-shelled turtle the size of a manhole cover. As Stabler is about to climb back into the truck, a police cruiser brakes to a stop behind him. Out jumps Chief James E. Maples of the Gulf Shores heat—the headquarters is located just beside the 'gator pond. Maples, stout and bouncy, insists on showing Stabler his latest set of pictures.

Inside the office, he produces a sheaf of Polaroids depicting Maples in a soldier suit, armed with an M-16 and various other weaponry, standing before what appear to be blazing bales of hay. "We got 17 tons of grass off that cabin cruiser yesterday," he says. "Buncha damn hippies runnin' it up from Mesko. I do believe Hayull, I stood right in the middle of it when it was burnin' and didn't feel a thang." As he flashes the photos like a new parent with baby pictures, one wonders what got him so high.

"Shucks, the Chief jest gets high on work," says Stabler as he drives away.



Stabler says his life style is "simple minded fun

"He's a dedicated man, Chief Maples is." There's a wry twinkle in the blue eyes, crows' feet at the corners of the broad, bearded face.

The Intracoastal Waterway, rimming the Gulf from Texas clear around to the Florida Keys, affords Stabler and his boating buddies with an all-weather playground. Even when gales are blowing outside the barrier islands that protect the Waterway from the Gulf, the seas inside are flat enough to run wide open at 70 mph. It's hazardous sport, what with mile-long strings of barges being threaded by their tugs through the serpentine, buoy-marked channels, but Stabler loves nothing better than jumping the wakes of the barges or running flat out beside them and making commerce look like it's standing still. He's doing it right now.

"Here he comes," says Bobby Holk, a young, pale-haired engineering grad from Auburn and—despite the rivalry between his school and Stabler's alma mater—a good boating buddy. "Roger's gonna whip him, though, you watch." The two racing boats appear from behind a barge train. Stabler in the lead and Roger Tyndal coming up fast behind him. Roger is a farmer—corn, mainly—but with the spring drought working havoc in the Deep South he has little to do. His corn tassled out at knee height. No ears. Hardly worth saving for silage. So Tyndal might as well spend the day racing.

The boats close rapidly, hulls angled up clear of the water, screws lashing the channel. The sound comes on like a swarm of giant killer bees. Just as Holk had predicted, Tyndal's boat—with an added 50 hp—snaps Stabler's up as soon as they reach flat water beyond the barge wake. Stabler shakes a fist in mock frustration, then the two leap one another's wakes as they head for the next marina.

"That's how we do it," Stabler says after he ties up at the Shelter Cove Marina. "We race around on the Waterway, and stop at all the marinas. There's about 10 or 12 of 'em between where I live and the end of the line, down there below Gulf Shores. Good way to travel, gettin' nowhere fast."

The marina is equipped in the uniform fashion of the region, air conditioner, bar, pool table, juke box. The bare essentials, in precisely that order. Tyndal

continued



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and Holk order a bottle of Tickled Pink flavored wine while Stabler feeds the juke box and racks the balls. As Waylon Jennings extols the virtues of "Luckenbach, Texas," Stabler proceeds to whip his buddies in a game of 8-ball. He wins a free beer, of course, and thus must play them another game so they can get revenge. Before they chalk the cues for the last time, Stabler and his partner (a middling player at best) have won all five games. Stabler picks up a tab from a beer can on the way out and slips it over his finger. "Looky here, Bobby," he says to Holk. "This is a Auburn class ring. See, it's got a built-in nose picker."

Stabler is now dining at a Gulf Shores squat-'n'-gobble. Wanda at his side, before him his *third* Scotch of the *meal* and a heaping plate of scampi in garlic sauce. "Scotch and scampi," he crows between chomps. "I love 'em. Johnnie Walker Red. Namath drinks it. Sonny Jurgensen is a Scotch drinker, too. Maybe all the great quarterbacks drink Scotch. And I love seafood, particularly these babies." (Munch, crunch, gulp.) "I told Pete Banaszak last season, just after we beat Pittshurgh in the opening game, that I'd eat scampi for 14 weeks in a row if it would guarantee us winning all our games." Like Proust's madeleine, the jumbo shrimp provoke a remembrance of the season past.

"They were all tough games—that's true in any season—but the only one that was really bad was the Patriots. And that's the only one we lost. New England kicked our butts good and proper, 48–17. I guess we should have been wary when we went up against them again in the first playoff game. But I wasn't. That was stupid. They damn near ended our playoff bid right there. In fact, at the start of the fourth quarter, with them leading 21–10, I got to thinking that maybe they had us, maybe all that work earlier in the year was going down the tube. But then we put one on the board and it was 21–17. That's when the controversial stuff started.

"They got down to our 32 and then, thank God, missed that field goal. When we got the ball back, I told the guys that this was it, this might be the last time we'd have the ball until next season. I figured we had to throw on every down to do it, and I hit four out of five. That put us in good shape on their 18. But then one of their tackles—I think it was Mel Lunsford—nailed me good for a nine-yard loss, and I missed the next pass. So there we were, third and 18, and we could only win on a touchdown. And only a minute to go.

"I called a sideline pass to Carl Garrett, but they had him covered like gangbusters. I threw anyway. Just as I cut loose, Ray Hamilton smacked me across the chops with his forearm. He'd been going for the ball, but I'd got it past him and he hit me with the momentum. They called roughing the passer. Salvation! We had a first down on their 13. I hit Dave

continued



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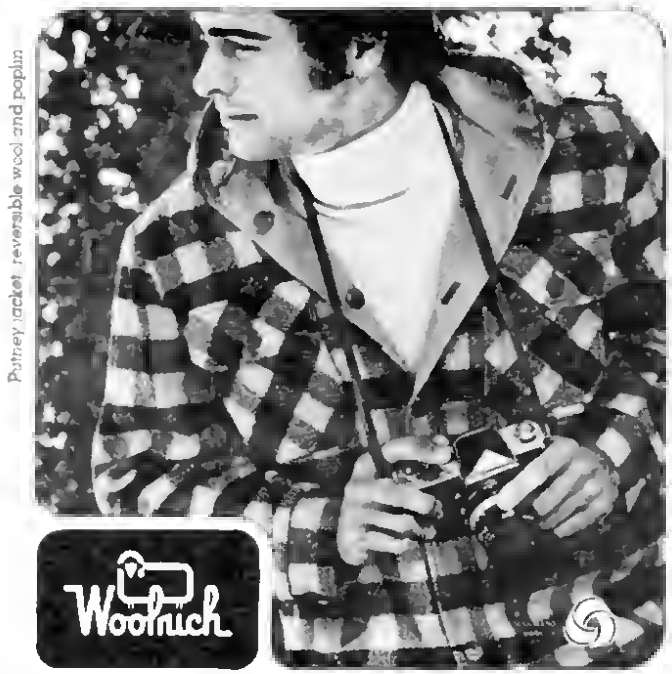


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Casper for five and Clarence Davis picked up four more on a run. Then Banaszak got a yard. It was going to be a close measurement, but one of the Pats started yelling at the officials and they called unsportsmanlike conduct. We had first and goal from the one.

"Banaszak tried to poke it in but they stopped him. Fourteen seconds left. I called an option play that we'd worked on Cincinnati—a roll-out to the left. I either throw to Casper or run. Gene Upshaw was in front of me, and he flattened the only guy in my way, and there we were—24–21."

The waiter brings another plate of scampi, another drink.

"Then we give Pittsburgh a whuppin'—24–7. That felt good. Don't let no one tell you that the Pittsburgh-Oakland rivalry is a press hype. We hate them; they hate us. Beating them that bad in the playoffs was sweet indeed. People who'd been saying we couldn't win the big ones had to eat crow. And Pittsburgh couldn't say we'd been lucky—the way they were in '72 when Franco picked up that ricochet and won in the final seconds. No, we flat blew them away."

Wanda, bored, utters a pussycat yawn. Stabler chucks her under the chin.

"The thing is, we really didn't know what to expect from the Vikings in the Super Bowl. We knew they were an experienced team, disciplined, and well coached at all levels, a no-nonsense bunch of guys, straight up, older than us but not necessarily wiser. We didn't think they'd add any new wrinkles for the Super Bowl, and we didn't plan to, either. We'd stick with what had worked, what got us there. Some of our guys got up so high that they vomited before the game. I remember Freddie Biletnikoff was tying his shoes over and over again. He'll do it maybe 50 times before a regular-season game, but that day Freddie must have hit 1,000.

"After the game was over, for the first time I felt real happy for myself. I remember thinking that there are only about six quarterbacks who have ever won the Super Bowl, and now I'm one of them. A great feeling, a great release, an ego balloon. Freddie was crying and Coach Madden was all red and grinning and guys were hugging each other like a bunch of fruits and pouring champagne over each other and then I suddenly had

continued

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this tremendous urge for a great big plate of scampi and a bottle of Johnnie Red."

On Friday night, the mayor of Foley is hosting a barbecue in Stabler's honor—a build-up of sorts for the big festivities of the night to follow. On Saturday, Stabler will submit to a "roast" in the civic auditorium. There, for $12.50 a plate, the local citizenry can watch their favorite son get insulted, maligned, slandered, humiliated and otherwise dumped upon by a panel of experts. The roast is for a good cause, though: a new field house for the Foley Lions high school teams. Anyone with the scratch can attend the roast, but the mayor's barbecue is by invitation only. The mayor of Foley is Arthur Holk, a sprightly slat of a man, an inveterate fisherman and boatman who owns much of the prime real estate in adjacent Gulf Shores. Mayor Holk is the cousin of Bobby Holk, Stabler's boating and 8-ball buddy.

The guests circulate under Japanese lanterns and electric bug-zappers on the spacious grounds of the mayor's house, wreathed in the smoke from sizzling steaks, munching freshly boiled jumbo shrimp and corn on the cob. It's an odd contrast in groups: on the one hand, the Foley upper crust, matronly, Rotarian, with cash-register eyeballs; on the other, the Stabler gang, raffish, sunburnt, hard of hand and piratical of glance. Two new arrivals add another element to the scene. Pete Banaszak and Tony Cline, a defensive end who played six seasons with the Raiders before being traded across the Bay to San Francisco, have showed up for the roast, and they plan to accompany Stabler to his week-long football camp near Selma. Banaszak and Cline are clearly on their best behavior. They've been in the air most of the day, flying in from the Coast, and are much the worse for wear. "We started drinking before we got on the plane," laments Cline, "and then we had to wait two hours in the Pensacola airport before Kenny remembered to send someone to pick us up. Where's that steak?"

Stabler, too, is the model of decorum. Freshly showered and deodorized, wearing crisply pressed slacks and a shiny open-necked shirt of many colors, he "Ma'ams" the ladies and "Sirs" the gents with the utmost deference. His voice is mild, an octave or so higher than when he's shooting pool. The smile is tentative, almost shy. But the bad-boy twinkle, though a bit disguised, still lights his eyes whenever he gets off a double entendre at the expense of the stuffed shirts. Wickedly Wonderful Wanda clings to his arm with dutiful, downcast eyes. Every now and then she looks up and winks knowingly behind his back at one or another of the Stabler entourage.

Stabler's house, just over the Alabama line at the tail end of the Florida Panhandle, and half an hour's drive from Foley or Gulf Shores, was stripped to the bare minimum of furnishings by his most recent divorce. A painting of a tiger glares from the wall of the empty dining room. A lone couch adorns the living room. The refrigerator is stocked mainly with beer and white wine (the latter for the Wickedly Wonderful one). In the den, things are a bit homier. Team photographs depict him as a Foley Lion, a 'Bama Crimson Tidester and a young, beardless Oakland Raider. In all of them, he is wearing his "barbecue face," and, thinking back, one realizes that all the photos of Stabler except the candids show him as shy and self-effacing. They do not capture the driven playfulness of the man.

The garage and the yard, though, tell a different story. In the garage are fishing rods, tackle boxes laden with lures, leaders and hooks; a bench rest for the barbells with which he works out three days a week; a Honda MR-250 Elsinore dirt bike; a glossily flaked dune buggy; his four-wheel-drive pickup truck. Out on the Bermuda-grass lawn, resting in its cradled trailer, the *Boogie* looks like it's still moving at 70 mph. And down at the Bear Point Marina, not yet ready for the water, is his latest acquisition: a tunnel-hulled racing boat that should leave the V-hulled *Boogie* gasping in its wake—and Roger Tyndal's boat as well. "I picked up the tunnel-hull cheap from a boy over near Mobile," Stabler says, his voice firing with eagerness. "I'm going to fix her up—needs a little glass work here and there—and paint her real nifty, and then hang a big Merc on her. I reckon she'll go 80 plus."

If a man can be assessed by his possessions, and particularly his attitude toward them, then Ken Stabler is a man in motion. Furious, violent motion. Exultant motion.

"Gettin' nowhere fast," he says. "I like it. As philosophies go, it's as good as any. What counts isn't so much where you're going—I mean, we all end up in the same place—but what counts is the getting there. Kind of simple-minded, maybe, but it's fun."

You hear the roadhouse before you see it—the amplified four-four beat of country music pounding like surf through the woods, silencing the bullfrogs, setting the beards of Spanish moss dancing on the trees that fringe the two-lane blacktop. The parking lot is jammed with pickups, most of them costly 4-WDs with customized paint jobs. Men reel and glare and slosh beer on themselves as they stagger around the veranda—skinny, sunburnt men in Levi's and workshirts, with scuffed cowboy boots and baseball caps cocked back on their foreheads to reveal the badge of the farmer: that blanched expanse of skin where the cap has shaded the face, babyhood pallor above the sun-blackened snoose-bulging jaws. Half shot with drink, they wear the faces of Confederate dead in Mathew Brady photographs.

Stabler and Wanda disappear into the musical melee. A pair of Stabler's friends, J. B. and Glen Campbell (distantly related to the singer, says Glen), belly up to the bar. They are joined by Henry Pitts, Stabler's attorney, who flew in from Selma for the barbecue and roast, and Henry's wife Sister. Pitts is the paragon of Southern hospitality, a witty, well-read man in his late 30s who, from his small country-lawyer office in the heart of the Cotton Belt, handles all the arrangements for Stabler's travel, endorsements and guest appearances—no easy task with a subject as whimsically peripatetic as Stabler. It's always amusing to watch Pitts introducing his wife to a stranger: "This is mah wife, Sistah." "Your wife's sister?" "No, mah wife—Sistah!" ("It always draws a double take when we check into a motel," he says.) Her real name is Mary Rose.

Foley's Kenny Stabler roast is well attended. The spacious new civic auditorium is nearly full in anticipation of seeing the local hero who has made it nationwide get his verbal comeuppance. Mayor Holk and Dr. John E. Foster, the master of ceremonies and long-time physician

continued

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to Foley's athletic teams, are everywhere, planting suggestions for sharp jibes with the forgathered roasters. The most interesting contrast of the evening is between Stabler and Scott Hunter, the Atlanta Falcons' quarterback and Stabler's successor at 'Bama who has journeyed down to Foley to deliver the invocation. Stabler is massive, bearded, almost bearlike in his heavy-shouldered carriage; Hunter, active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, is dapper, clean-shaven, very sincere. He could be the president of the Jaycees. Stabler could be a fugitive from a chain gang.

Seated in a high-backed, throne-like chair in front of the stage, Stabler takes the roasters' best shots, wincing with mock outrage at the repeated references to his dubious intellectuality, his unconventional training habits ("Eight beers and two hours' sleep a night," says Banaszak, "that's the way to stardom as an NFL quarterback"), his penchant for monogamy ("He's a one-woman man—one woman a night").

"The other day," says Tony Cline, "my son asked me, 'Daddy, when are they going to roast you?' 'When I get overweight and overpaid,' I told him."

Terry Henley, a former Auburn football player, embroiders on the theme of Stabler's womanizing. "Up at 'Bama, Kenny had a girl friend who was so ugly that when she went to the school psychiatrist he made her lie face down on the couch. Why, she was so ugly that Kenny couldn't bring himself to take her out to dinner. Instead he'd put her in a corner and feed her with a slingshot."

The digs are harsh, hard, biting close to the marrow. The fans love it. Stabler gives as good as he gets. When all the roasters have had their say, he delivers a brief rebuttal. His voice is once again his public voice, shading to the higher registers, tentative, almost boyish. But in a few words he rips everyone who savaged him, and then some. The good people of Baldwin County, Ala. leave the hall sated with rubber chicken and ribaldry.

"Good folks," Stabler says later, driving back toward Gulf Shores. "Yeah, I'll die here. I really haven't given much thought to what I'm going to do when I'm done with football. Something competitive, though. It has to be something with a hard challenge to it. Maybe racing boats, or racing cars. I really get off on high speed, keeping to the edge of control. If I was to coach, as a lot of people have suggested, I wouldn't want to coach anything above the high school level. Not college football and certainly not the pros. But my life-style is too rough—too much booze and babes and cigarettes—to be a high school coach. I'd hardly be a shining example to the young athletes of the future. The quarterbacks I admire most are Bobby Layne and Billy Kilmer—tough, hard-living guys who don't know how to quit. We've got a lot of that spirit on the Raiders. For the past five or six years we've been the best team, overall, in the game, and yet, until last season, we never quite made it all the way. But we kept on a-truckin', never quitting, never doubting our ability to do it. Al Davis is tough and it rubs off on the rest of us, all the way down the line.

"But Al can be generous, too. Look at this Super Bowl ring—it's got to be the most expensive one any owner has ever given to his team." The crest of the ring glints in the humid darkness—16 small diamonds, one for each of the Raiders' 1976 victories, encircling a large stone that represents the Super Bowl triumph. "The only thing that's missing is a little chip of coal on the bottom of the ring, to represent the shellacking New England gave us early in the season."

Stabler cruises down the main drag of Gulf Shores. A light surf is sloshing in off the Gulf, lit by a fat, white moon. From the Pink Pony Pub come the sounds of revelry—war whoops and rebel yells, the clink of beer pitchers and the whine of the juke box. Kenny Rogers' voice grates through the cooling, wet air, bitter with salt. "You picked a fine time to leave me, Lucille, with four hungry children and crops in the field. . ."

"Sure hope it rains," says Stabler. "The farmers are losing their shirts. Anyway," getting back to his point of departure, "I'll never end up in coaching. Maybe I'll open up a honky-tonk here in Gulf Shores. Or maybe a little marina with a pool table and a juke box and tanks full of live bait. Honky-tonks and marinas—that's where I spend most of the good time anyway. But whatever it is, I'll die here." He turns the truck toward the sound of the music. "Hell, I'm falling behind in my clean-living campaign. Let's grab us a beer." **END**



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SI0919

FOR THE RECORD

A roundup of the week Sept. 5-11

BOXING—ALFREDO ESCALERA of Puerto Rico successfully defended his WBC junior lightweight crown for the 10th time, gaining a unanimous 15-round decision over Mexico's Sigfrido Rodriguez in San Juan

PRO FOOTBALL—Remember Ricky Bell? He was the man drafted *before* Tony Dorsett. The Tampa Bay rookie from USC scored both touchdowns in the Buccaneers' 14–0 upset of Baltimore. One touchdown was an 11-yard dash up the middle, the other came on a seven-yard pass from an obscure rookie, Quarterback Randy Hedberg, the Bucs' eighth-round draft pick from Minot (N. Dak.) State who has taken over for the injured Mike Boryla and Gary Huff. Cincinnati finished the preseason with five straight victories, pasting the Chicago Bears 24–6 as Ken Anderson fired three touchdown passes, including two to Billy Brooks. New Orleans' Chuck Muncie plunged for two one-yard touchdowns and Rick Szaro booted a pair of field goals to lead the Saints past Houston 20–16 for their fifth preseason win. The New Orleans defense held the Oilers to two second half first downs and picked off three John Hadl passes. Linebacker Randy Gradishar intercepted a Scott Bull pass and returned it 70 yards for a touchdown as Denver embarrassed San Francisco 20–0 to finish with a 5–1 record. Roger Staubach, back after missing two games with a hamstring pull, completed 8 of 13 passes and Efren Herrera booted three field goals as Dallas humiliated Pittsburgh 30–0. Cowboy Running Back Preston Pearson said, "We still have to play the Steelers two more times. Once in the regular season and once in the Super Bowl." Monte Johnson's interception of a Joe Namath pass led to Oakland's first touchdown. Ted Hendricks' blocked punt led to the second and Oakland went on to whip Los Angeles 21–0, giving the Rams a 1–5 exhibition record. Minnesota crushed Buffalo 30–6 as Fran Tarkenton completed 14 of 22 passes and Chuck Foreman scored two touchdowns. O. J. Simpson, of all people, called Foreman "the greatest football player in *America today*." *Washington beat the New York Jets* 14–7, both touchdowns following interceptions by reserve Defensive Back Eddie Brown. Detroit nipped Cleveland 24–20 on a four-yard touchdown run by Dexter Bussey with 1:56 left in the game. Green Bay broke a *four-game losing streak by beating Philadelphia* 24–16. Quarterback Tony Adams replaced starting Quarterback Mike Livingston in the second half and tossed two touchdown passes to power Kansas City past St. Louis 37–20 in the Missouri state championship. New England closed out its exhibition season with a 5–1 record, beating Atlanta 29–10. Miami got two touchdown passes from bespectacled Bob Griese to defeat the Giants 27–21, and Rickey Young scored three touchdowns in San Diego's 38–20 win over Seattle

GOLF—LANNY WADKINS shot a final-round 65 for a 13-under-par 267 to win the World Series of Golf—and $100,000—by five strokes over Tom Weiskopf and Hale Irwin at the Firestone Country Club in Akron

JOANNE CARNER shot a final-round 69 for a total of 210 to win the $50,000 National Jewish Hospital Open in Denver by two strokes over Hollis Stacy

JOHN FOUGHT won the U.S. Amateur Championship, beating Doug Fischesser 9 and 8 in the 36-hole match-play final round at the Aronimink Golf Club in Newton Square, Pa.

GIL MORGAN fired a final-round 69 for a 14-under-par 270 to win his first tour event, the $200,000 B.C. Open at Endicott, N.Y. Lee Elder was second, five strokes back

HORSE RACING—Steve Cauthen rode AFFIRMED ($4.40) to a nose victory over Alydar in the $112,950 Futurity at Belmont Park, covering the seven furlongs in 1:21⅗. It was the 17-year old Cauthen's first win in a $100,000 race

STUB ($5.60), Ron Turcotte up, scored a 3½-length victory over Rainy Princess in the $124,715 Arlington-Washington Lassie Stakes at Arlington Park. The winner covered the six furlongs in a record-tying 1:10⅘

MOTOR SPORTS—MARIO ANDRETTI drove his Lotus to a 16.9-second victory over Niki Lauda in the Grand Prix of Italy, at Monza. With his second-place finish, Lauda took a 27-point lead over Jody Scheckter in the Formula 1 world drivers' championship standings. Lauda needs just one more point to clinch the 1977 title

DAVID PEARSON, driving a Mercury, won the $207,000 *Southern 500 stock car race at Darlington, S.C.* for the second straight year. Pearson averaged 106.797 mph and finished 2.5 seconds ahead of Donnie Allison's Chevrolet

NEIL BONNETT, driving a Dodge, won the $71,735 Capital City 400 at Richmond, Va., averaging 80.644 mph on the ½-mile track. Bonnett finished five seconds ahead of Richard Petty's Dodge

TENNIS—GUILLERMO VILAS won the U.S. Open men's championship, beating Jimmy Connors 2–6, 6–3, 7–6, 6–0 at Forest Hills (*page 12*). CHRIS EVERT took her third consecutive women's title, defeating Wendy Turnbull 7–6, 6–2. BOB HEWITT and FREW MACMILLAN beat Raul Ramirez and Brian Gottfried in the men's doubles, 6–4, 6–0. MARTINA NAVRATILOVA and BETTY STOVE won the women's doubles from Renee Richards and Betty-ann Stuart 6–1, 7–6

TRACK & FIELD—KATHY SCHMIDT of Los Angeles set a women's world record in the javelin with a throw of 227′ 5″ in Fürth, West Germany. The previous record of 226′ 9″ was held by Ruth Fuchs of East Germany

VOLLEYBALL—The ORANGE COUNTY STARS, led by Player-Coach Dodge Parker, won the IVA championship in El Paso, defeating the El Paso-Juarez Sol 12–3, 13–15, 10–12, 12–6, 6–4. El Paso's Lino de Melo (Caveman) Gama came off the bench after a disabling knee injury to Spiker Ed Skorek in the second game and made 14 kills in 25 attempts in the second and third games. But in the fifth-game tie-breaker, Bob Stafford led the Stars to the title with four kills. To reach the final, Orange County beat Santa Barbara 11–13, 12–9, 12–4, 8–12, 6–3 and El Paso-Juarez upset Denver 12–4, 12–14, 8–12, 17–15, 6–5

MILEPOSTS—TO BE PAROLED: From the Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institute, MARVIN BARNES, Detroit Pistons' 6′ 9″ forward, after serving five months of his one-year sentence for probation violation. Barnes will be released Oct. 14, four days before the NBA season opens

RESTRAINED: By Clark County (Nev.) District Court Judge James Brennan, the University of Nevada Las Vegas from suspending Basketball Coach JERRY TARKANIAN, pending a Sept. 21 hearing. The NCAA recently placed UNLV on two years' probation for alleged violations in its basketball program

SOLD: Guard ERNIE DiGREGORIO, by the Buffalo Braves to the Los Angeles Lakers. In 1974 DiGregorio was the NBA Rookie of the Year, the league leader in assists and free-throw percentage, and scored 15.2 points a game. In another NBA deal, the Indiana Pacers sent All-Star Guard DON BUSE, last season's steals and assists champion, to the Phoenix Suns for Guard RICKEY SOBERS

CREDITS

4—Anthony Donna 7—drawing by SOW. 12—Walter Iooss Jr. 13—Co Rentmeester. 16—Co Rentmeester (left), Walter Iooss Jr. 18—Walter Iooss Jr. 16,17—Co Rentmeester. 18—Tony Triolo. 41—George Long (center). 46-84—Illustrations by Sandy Huffaker. 68—Lane Stewart. 70—Grant M. Haller. 76—Tony Tomsic. 82—Tony Tomsic. 87—John Iacono. 105—John Burke (T).

FACES IN THE CROWD



CINOY NICHOLAS
SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

Nicholas, 20, of the University of Toronto, is the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways non-stop. Her time of 19.55 for the crossing from Dover to Cape Gris-Nez to Dover also lowered John Erickson's 1975 record by 10.05



LEONID OERVBINSKY
BRONX, N.Y.

Dervbinsky, 21, a junior at NYU, is the youngest epée champion in the history of the Amateur Fencers League of America. At the national championships in Portland, Ore., Dervbinsky won 21 matches, including four of five in the final round



KRISTINE FLORES
EAST HILLS, CALIF.

Kristine, 11, who is one of the few girls in the East Hills Little League, led the Big Red to their third straight championship. She had a 14–0 record, struck out 130 in 70⅗ innings, threw a no-hitter and batted .509 with 52 RBIs



JENNIE GORHAM
GLADSTONE, MO.

Jennie, 16, a junior at North Kansas City High, won three gold medals at the AAU Junior Olympics in Lincoln, Neb. She tied the meet record of 23.9 in the 220, won the 100 in 10.89 and took her second straight 440 title (54.67)



WIN HUNSUCKER
GREENSBORO, N.C.

Win, 16, a left-handed-hitting outfielder on the Colt League Greensboro Green All-Stars, hit three grand-slam home runs in one week. His team was behind or tied each time he batted with the bases loaded, and each homer was a game-winner



REBECCA ANN CHASE
DALLAS, ORE.

Rebecca, 8, made a hole in one on the first hole she ever played, the 125-yard, par-3 5th at Oak Knoll. She scored her ace with a three-wood and is reportedly the youngest girl ever to make a hole in one. Her score for nine holes was 61

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THE RANKINGS

Sir

Notre Dame is the No 1 college football team in the country. You picked a winner!

The Irish will wake up the echoes.

PATRICK BERGIN
Racine, Wis

Sir

With Notre Dame's schedule, Vassar could be No 1

LARRY FULLER
Lincoln, Neb

Sir

Any school that has a tad of talent and has all three military academies on its schedule ought to be heading for a great record.

Notre Dame should be ashamed, and should be dropped down to Division II. But they are probably just laughing about how they have snookered the sportswriters again

STEPHEN BRUCE STOVALL
Wheaton, Ill

Sir

I will bet my maize-and-blue nose warmer, my Michigan helmet lamp, my "M" frisbee and my Wolverine wine decanter that Michigan will 1) win the Big Ten, 2) win the Rose Bowl and 3) win the national championship when Oklahoma's tough schedule and Notre Dame's lackluster offense show them up

HOWARD WRIGHT
Matteson, Ill.

• Other letters proclaimed that USC, Oklahoma, Ohio State, UCLA and Pitt would be No 1 —ED

Sir.

You do not seem to know the mascot of No. 4 Texas Tech Whatever that widemouth character is (an Indian brave?), he certainly is *not* a Red Raider! A Red Raider is a masked man wearing a flowing red cape and riding a black horse

ROBERT GILL
Upland, Calif

Sir

While Texas A&I has indeed been the dominant force in NAIA football circles for the past three seasons, the Javelinas are not the only NAIA school worthy of recognition (SI Football Preview, Sept. 5)

Before the Associated Press discontinued its small-college poll last year, seven NAIA institutions were ranked among the top 15 small-college teams (NCAA-NAIA combined) in the 1974 final football rankings, and in 1975 the NAIA placed six teams (three of them in the top six) among the 15 best small-college football teams in all of the country

There were 283 ex-NAIA players on National Football League rosters in 1976. The NAIA boasted the Rookie of the Year (Minnesota's Sammy White) and the NFC's top rusher (Chicago's Walter Payton). In all, 10 NAIA graduates were on the NFL's All-Pro and All-Rookie teams.

With its graduates dotting NFL rosters, its 240 football-playing institutions and a student enrollment of more than 970,000, the NAIA indeed represents more than one institution

CHARLIE EPPLER
Public Relations Director, NAIA
Kansas City, Mo.

Sir:

I expected to see Northwestern mentioned in the Big Ten report in six words or less. (Something like "The Wildcats will finish last again.") However, those words were nowhere to be found. You excluded Northwestern and reported on only nine of the Big Ten schools

You have forgotten the team that holds up the entire league. You have forgotten the brains (surely not the brawn) of the Big Ten You have forgotten the last school other than Ohio State or Michigan to finish second in the conference since 1967 NU did it in 1971

CHRISTINE BRENNAN
Toledo

COACH AND SCRIBE

Sir

Wholehearted congratulations to John Underwood for his pointed introduction to the college football preview (*Fewer Is Finer Except for Some Flaws*, Sept. 5). Only one complaint: he merely scratched the surface of an issue that is crucial in today's system of education and athletics. Instead of waiting for Walter Byers, why doesn't SI turn Underwood loose on other football coaches, as well as those in basketball, hockey, etc.? Three pages hardly does justice to the problem at hand How about three issues?

JOHN E THOMAS
St. Paul

Sir

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED and John Underwood are to be commended for the astute article

Domination of college football by a select few—the polls, bowls and television—represents one of our biggest problems

Limitations on grants may well be the salvation for college football in terms of achieving equality, sanity and economy.

And Underwood's observations regarding academics and athletics are totally on target, as well

Congratulations on an accurate assessment of college football

WAYNE DUKE, COMMISSIONER
BIG TEN CONFERENCE
Schaumburg, Ill

DAIDIADN EARDAS

Sir

Why don't we have a statistic in football similar to the one in baseball, which tabulates errors by receivers?

I hate to see a quarterback listed as having completed 1 of 10 passes when three balls have been plain dropped

CHARLES L. HILL
St. Petersburg, Fla

ROOKIES

Sir:

Your article on Dave Rozema (*The Rose Has Bloomed*, Aug. 29) was great. The Tiger rookie deserved some recognition. But I think it is inexcusable to leave Bob Bailor of the Blue Jays off your list of American League Rookie of the Year candidates while including Bump Wills, Eddie Murray and Mitchell Page. Bailor has the best average of all the regular rookies in the league (.320) and is playing a good center field. He has been in the top 10 in batting since the beginning of the season and should have been on this year's All-Star team. At the All-Star break he was second in batting to Rod Carew.

BRAHM GODEL
Toronto, Ontario

Sir:

What about Detroit's Steve Kemp? As a rookie in his first full season, he has 18 home runs, 82 RBIs, and a solid .261 average as the Tigers' cleanup hitter, and he has made but four errors in the outfield. By these stats, I would say that Kemp is the leading candidate.

DAN WENZLICK
Chesaning, Mich.

SDCCER BOWL

Sir:

In your NASL preview (April 11) you wrote "Coach Jimmy Gabriel of the Seattle Sounders is trying an experiment that could assure him of the basement in the division." The experiment called for the use of Americans and "modestly talented foreigners." But the experiment paid off. One of the Americans, Jim McAlister, won the 1977 Rookie of the Year award, while two of our "modestly talented foreigners," Mel Machin and Mike England, made the NASL All-Star first team, with Jimmy Robertson getting honorable mention.

This was no surprise to the fans of the Sounders, who took the Pacific Division and went on to play the millionaire Cosmos in Soccer Bowl '77.

They lost, but that's not bad for a team assured of the basement!

LAURA BUSCIO
Seattle

STILL DDLDEN

Sir:

Although his records have been erased (*Bottom Was Up To Topping a Mark*, Sept. 5), Mark Spitz' memorable performance in the '72 Olympics at Munich will never be forgotten by anyone who saw it.

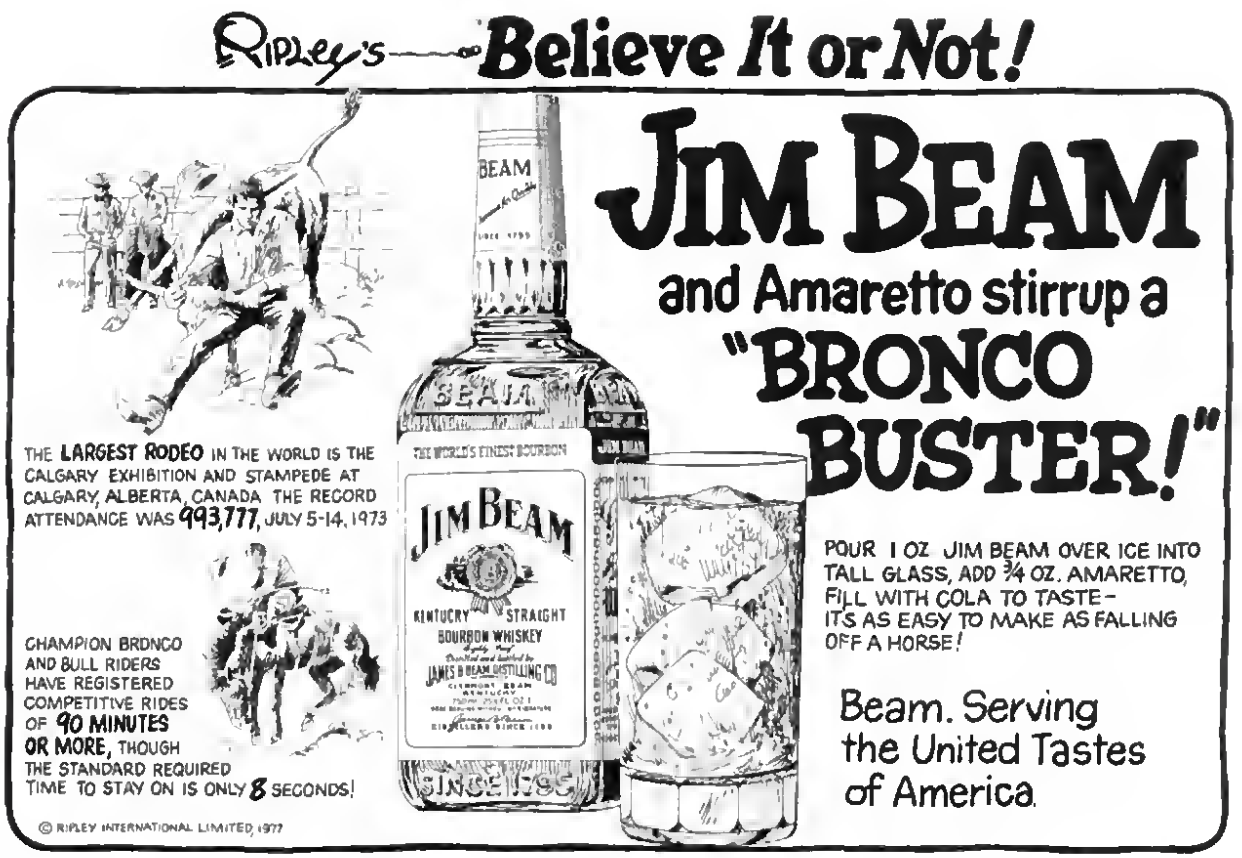
GORDON STRAUSE
Atlanta

BDRED

Sir:

The story about Alberto Juantorena (*El Caballo Is Off and Running*, Aug. 29) should have been shortened and printed in your FOR THE RECORD section. I'm tired of hearing about the special treatment given Russian, East German and Cuban athletes. Our '72 Olympic champions, Vincent Matthews (400

continued



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meters) and Dave Wottle (800 meters), weren't supplied with cars and houses. And Cuba's Teofilo Stevenson, what kind of hero is he? Why hasn't he fought Ali, Norton or Frazier?

DON SHOTLAND
Dallas

MAGIC MACHINE

Sir:

As an industrial engineer I found *Gideon's Magic Machine* (Aug. 22) fascinating. Although it wasn't mentioned, I hope that Dr. Ariel's vision of the future includes exploring the use of his techniques in physical therapy and the design of orthopedic devices. The knowledge gained from the functioning of healthy athletes might be an invaluable aid to the injured and handicapped. The design of an improved high-jump shoe might be the first step toward a scientifically designed orthopedic shoe.

DENNIS FLYNN
Honolulu

DH IN THE SERIES

Sir:

Why does SI charge the National League with intransigence on the subject of the designated hitter (SCORECARD, Aug. 29)? The NL should be praised for its insistence that at least every other year the World Series will be played as the game was designed.

The NL should tell the American League and Bowie Kuhn to stuff the designated-hitter rule. It has prostituted the game. It distorts the records. Wonderful man that Al Kaline may be, he never would have gotten 3,007 hits had he had to play baseball during his entire career. Nor would many other "glorious" records now being set be made were the players playing positions other than designated hitter.

JOHN MCCORMACK
Dallas

NO MYTHS, PLEASE

Sir:

You mention "Mekili" Ieremia, the 238-pound Samoan leader of Brigham Young's defense. You say, "He arrived in the States by sailboat, was befriended by a Protestant minister."

Actually, my son and I met Ieremia while we were filming a documentary on a 60-foot schooner in the Pacific. He joined the crew and eventually came with us to the U.S. However, before the mythmakers at BYU get too carried away, I am not a Protestant minister and Mekeli (which is how he spells his first name) arrived in the U.S. by airplane. Also, he is a tackle, not an end.

JAMES LIPSCOMB
New York City

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